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THE FUTURE OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE

By LEICESTER WEBB

WITHIN the last year or so there have been signs of another attempt to halt the drift toward anarchic restrictionism in international trade. Its origins may be discerned in the conference of British Commonwealth Finance Ministers summoned to London in January 1952 to consider the third of the sterling area's postwar crises. This conference, after branding as "palliatives" the measures taken to remedy recurring balance of payments deficits, concluded that a lasting solution of the sterling area's problems was possible only "when the world-wide trade of the sterling area is on a substantially higher level than at present, when sterling is freely convertible into all the main currencies of the world, and its position need no longer be supported by import restrictions."[1] A year later, another Commonwealth conference reaffirmed these objections in more striking language: "The Commonwealth countries look outward to . . . co-operation with other countries, not inward to a closed association. It is their common purpose, by their own efforts and together with others, to increase world trade for the benefit of all peoples."[2] The first formal step toward widening the basis of this initiative took place in March of this year, when Mr. Anthony Eden and Mr. R. A. Butler, acting in this matter for the British Commonwealth as a whole, discussed the economic prospect with Mr. John Foster Dulles, and found "reason to hope for continued progress towards a better-balanced, growing world trade and the restoration of a multilateral system of trade and payments."[3] From Washington, Mr. Eden and Mr. Butler went to Paris in fulfillment of a promise to "keep in step with the Organization for European Economic Co-operation."

The point now reached is one which the great trading nations

[1] Press communiqué, Conference of Commonwealth Finance Ministers, January 21, 1952.

[2] Press communiqué, Commonwealth Economic Conference, December 13, 1952.

[3] Press statement, March 11, 1953.

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have reached several times in the period since the early thirties. That is, they have been brought to a recognition of the inadequacy of efforts by single States or groups of States to put their international trade and payments on a more satisfactory basis and have been impelled to seek agreement on the widest possible basis to principles of international economic order. But it is always at this point that collective endeavor begins to go astray, and the original impetus is gradually dissipated in the intricacies of multinational negotiation. There is, it might seem, something in the accepted technique of international economic conferences which unsuits them to their purpose. It may therefore be useful at this time to review the history of the ill-fated International Trade Organization in order to discover what lessons it holds for those who still believe in the possibility of rallying the free world to the ideals of economic liberalism.[4]

In February 1942 (in Article VII of the Mutual Aid Agreement), the United States and United Kingdom governments pledged themselves to work toward "the elimination of all forms of discriminatory treatment in international commerce, and . . . the reduction of tariffs and other trade barriers." The United Kingdom government gave the pledge with some misgivings, partly because it realized that non-discrimination would create difficulties in the probable postwar monetary situation and partly because the Dominions objected strongly to an obligation which seemed to involve an abandonment of Imperial preference. This second consideration weighed far more heavily than the first, for although the economic significance of tariff preferences is commonly overestimated, the Dominions were, and have remained, strongly attached to the Ottawa system. But, apart from this, the order of ideas suggested by Article VII—multilateral trading, scaling-down of tariffs, elimination of quantitative restrictions, and a move away from State regulation in whatever form—accorded well enough with the thinking of a majority of Ministers, high officials, academic economists, and journalists. Not that any very deep thought was given to the

[4] As a New Zealand government official, the writer of this article took part in the discussions leading to the calling of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Employment and was a member of the New Zealand delegation to the Geneva phase of the conference.

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subject. The general view, to judge by the published comments of the time, was that quota and exchange restrictions were an unfortunate legacy from the economic depression of the early thirties and had been continued and accentuated because of the war. It was understood that the liquidation of the United Kingdom's overseas investments would necessitate a great increase in her exports after the war if her living standards were to be maintained, and it seemed obvious that such an increase would not be possible unless there was a general move away from quotas and exchange controls. On the surface, official British thinking about international trade seemed to have altered little since the fiasco of the World Economic Conference of 1933.

Below the surface, however, there were questionings which went much deeper than such issues as non-discrimination and Imperial preference. On October 8, 1943, in the course of discussions among British officials on Article VII, J. M. Keynes sent the following note to Percivale Liesching, then a high official in the Board of Trade:

> Thanks for your note on State trading. If in this matter you leave loop-holes in your scheme, it will not upset *me*. Indeed, the more loop-holes you leave the wiser you will be in my opinion.
>
> As you know, I am, I am afraid, a hopeless sceptic about this return to nineteenth century *laissez faire*, for which you and the State Department seem to have such a nostalgia.
>
> I believe the future lies with—
>
> (i) State trading for commodities;
> (ii) International cartels for necessary manufactures; and
> (iii) Quantitative import restrictions for non-essential manufactures.
>
> Yet all these future instrumentalities for orderly economic life in the future you seek to outlaw.[5]

This, says Mr. Harrod, must not be taken "au grand sérieux"; and he later assures us reverently that, toward the end of Keynes' life, "his mind reverted to Adam Smith and to the great truths which he preached." This claim that a notable backslider died in the faith may be a service to economic orthodoxy, but it obscures a truth which is important to any understanding of the ITO negotiations—the truth that, from about 1930 to the time of his death, Keynes had a split mind on the subject of

[5] R. F. Harrod, *The Life of John Maynard Keynes*, New York, 1951, pp. 567-68.

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international trade and that his doubts were shared, though not often voiced, by a substantial minority of officials in the United Kingdom and the Dominions. In 1945 Keynes did change his attitude toward the ITO proposals, but he did so (as indeed Mr. Harrod's narrative shows) because of the sincerity and vigor of the American initiative rather than because of a change in his basic thinking.[6]

When the crisis of the war passed and victory for the Western Powers seemed only a matter of time, plans for giving effect to Article VII were discussed by British and American officials and full reports of these discussions were relayed to the Dominion governments for their comments. Though the materials are not yet available which would enable an adequate account to be written of the intricate negotiations that led to the calling of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Employment, it is possible to indicate the points of view of some of the countries concerned. The strongest drive for action came, of course, from the Americans, whose thinking, on the level of procedure, was dominated by the success of Mr. Cordell Hull's Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act. The method of the Geneva tariff negotiations, and of the subsequent negotiations under the General

[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 608-9. The extent to which Keynes' attitude changes is measured by comparing the note to Liesching with the following quotation from his posthumous article, "The Balance of Payments of the United States," *Economic Journal*, LVI (June 1946), pp. 185-86: "I find myself moved, not for the first time, to remind contemporary economists that the classical training embodied some permanent truths of great significance, which we are liable today to overlook because we associate them with other doctrines which we cannot now accept without much qualification. There are in these matters deep undercurrents at work, natural forces, one can call them, or even the invisible hand, which are operating towards equilibrium. If it were not so, we could not have got on even so well as we have for many decades past. The United States is becoming a high-living, high-cost country beyond any previous experience. Unless their internal, as well as their external, economic life is to become paralysed by the Midas touch, they will discover ways of life which, compared with the ways of the less fortunate regions of the world, must tend towards, and not away from, external equilibrium. Admittedly, if the classical medicine is to work, it is essential that import tariffs and export subsidies should not progressively offset its influence. It is for this reason that one is entitled to draw some provisional comfort from the present mood of the American Administration . . . as embodied in the *Proposals for Consideration by an International Conference on Trade and Employment*. . . . I must not be misunderstood. I do not suppose that the classical medicine will work by itself or that we can depend on it. We need quicker and less painful aids of which exchange variation and overall import control are the most important. But in the long run these expedients will work better and we shall need them less, if the classical medicine is also at work." One may reasonably assume that, had Keynes lived through the fiasco of convertibility, he would have gone back to his 1943 position.

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Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, is in effect the method of the Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act writ large: bilateral agreements generalized by means of most-favored-nation clauses. But it is important to understand that the springs of American enthusiasm for liberal trade were moral and political rather than economic. Men like Cordell Hull, Will Clayton, Harry Hawkins, and Clair Wilcox were in the grand tradition of American liberalism, the essence of which is the belief that the State's authority should be limited in scope and subjected to checks and balances. Their attack was on étatism rather than on protectionism. They regarded direct State control over trade as evil in its intent and in its consequences, as the hallmark and chosen instrument of totalitarianism.

Among the Dominions, there was agreement on opposing the abolition of Imperial preferences and beyond that a surprising diversity of opinions. The Canadian government somewhat embarrassed the Americans by the warmth and purity of its devotion to the liberal trade idea; for Canada suffered severely from American agricultural protectionism. The Australian government was convinced that international guarantees of a high level of effective demand should precede any return to multilateralism. The New Zealand government was totally out of sympathy with the idea of liberal trade and would have approved enthusiastically the terms of the note from Keynes to Liesching.

Of all the postwar experiments in internationalism, none had more time and preparation put into it than the effort to reestablish multilateral trading on the basis of a universal code of fair practices and to create the conditions in which trade would increase in volume. None has had more meager results. The charter of the International Trade Organization, drafted and redrafted at London, Lake Success, Geneva, and Havana, is now pigeon-holed and likely to remain so. The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade remains precariously alive, but is severely limited in scope.

For this failure some of the blame must be laid at the door of the academic economists, for the great majority of whom the superior efficiency of the private trader, the benefits of an international division of labor, and the evil consequences of State

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control had remained articles of faith. Most of them had, it is true, accommodated themselves to the Keynesian revolution in matters of domestic policy. But when it came to international trade they recoiled—as at times did Keynes himself—from the logical consequences of the new beliefs, and involved themselves in the curious proposition that economic planning should stop short at national borders, leaving international trade as the last preserve of laissez faire. To laymen, it is at first sight remarkable that economists could remain apparently so insensitive to the direction and momentum of change in capitalist institutions and to changes in the objectives of social policy. The vast experiments in State trading during two world wars, the movement toward collective marketing of primary products, the progressive deterioration of the international payments system, the growing emphasis by governments on economic stability as a policy objective—these and other signs seemed to point clearly in the direction of administratively controlled international trade. The economists had, however, a valid excuse for ignoring the signs. Whatever might be said for economic controls in the national sphere, their record in international trade had been so bad that "control" and "restriction" were near synonyms. The lesson of experience seemed to be that laissez faire was the only practicable organizing principle for international trade and payments.[7]

It would, of course, be unfair to suggest that the mixed band of officials and economists who first gave shape to the International Trade Organization project ignored existing institutions and practices. The earliest documents, including those from the State Department, took the world as it was, not balking at

[7] For a typical expression of this point of view, see J. B. Condliffe, *The Reconstruction of World Trade*, New York, 1940, pp. 352-53: ". . . there is no practical likelihood that independent or autonomous monetary policies based on exchange control can be fitted into a system of international economic co-operation and equilibrium. Regulation of credit by control of its price, the rate of interest, might be worked by international consultation or by clearing through an international authority; but centralized rationing cannot be so adjusted. It is significant that the most precise plan yet projected for an International Monetary Authority gives power to that Authority to forbid exchange control and to supervise and gradually eliminate quantitative controls of international trade. Such rationing is impossible of international co-ordination and is, in fact, inextricably bound up with that concentration of economic power in the hands of State officials which is an essential attribute and hallmark of militarist policies."

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such awkward realities as State trading enterprises, commodity agreements, and quantitative controls on trade. It was not their awareness of reality but their method of dealing with reality that was open to criticism. The general principle was that what could not be cured should be regularized. Quantitative regulation of trade, for instance, was scheduled for ultimate abolition, but in the meantime was to operate under rules designed to prevent discriminatory or unduly restrictive practices.[8] State trading enterprises were accepted as permanent, but were subjected to rules obliging them to conduct their operations in accordance with the principles assumed to govern the operations of private traders.[9] Whether quantitative regulation of trade can ever be non-discriminatory and whether a State trade enterprise can be made to act otherwise than in accordance with its nature may reasonably be doubted.

The immediate effect of trying to compass these ends by a code of rules was to introduce a nightmarish complexity into the charter of the proposed International Trade Organization. For as soon as the code was exposed to discussion and criticism by even the relatively restricted group of countries represented at Geneva, its American sponsors were forced to a difficult choice: either to abandon the hope of universality or to accept a wide variety of exceptions and escape clauses, some of which sanctioned practices which were deeply repugnant to them. They chose the second course, and for seven months fought a rearguard action to keep the derogations from liberal trade within reasonable limits. The Charter's 106 clauses, 16 annexes, and 50 interpretative notes are witness to their failure. The history of the ITO project might have been very different if, halfway through the Geneva conference, the Americans and the British had faced the plain truth that to draft in detail a code for international trade was impossible because of the diversity of national economic systems, and had contented themselves with a brief and simple charter setting up an international trade organization and establishing a procedure for dealing with complaints on the lines of the existing Articles 93 to 97. But an international

[8] Charter of the International Trade Organization, Articles 20-24.
[9] *Ibid.*, Articles 29-32.

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conference becomes a world in itself, and after three months the Geneva gathering was so deeply immersed in complexities and so entangled in the procedures it had established that it was incapable of heroic and sweeping decisions. Thus there emerged for transmission to the wider gathering at Havana what is perhaps the most bewildering document in the history of international organization.

If the profusion of escape clauses had represented merely an attempt to accommodate general rules to the circumstances of particular countries, the Charter might have survived. But many of them are the result of fundamental conflicts of ideas, the most serious of which was introduced by the Australian government when it succeeded in getting into the Charter a pledge, binding on individual members, to promote within their territories full employment and "a large and steadily growing volume of real income and effective demand."[10] Given the imperfections of existing instruments of economic control, any reconciliation between this ideal and the liberal trade ideal seems merely verbal; for while it may be theoretically possible for a government to keep effective demand at a level high enough to maintain full employment, yet not high enough to cause inflation and balance of payments disequilibrium, in practice this feat of tightrope-walking is impossible over any length of time. The conclusion must be that a government which regards full employment as the prime objective of its policy cannot surrender its right to use quantitative control of imports to safeguard its balance of payments. The New Zealand government, whose full-employment policy had involved it in an exchange crisis at the end of 1938, made this point with unanswerable logic and eventually wrote into the Charter Paragraph 4 (b) of Article 21, which in effect licenses the type of trade policy that it had been the original purpose of the Americans to bar absolutely.[11]

[10] *Ibid.*, Article 1.

[11] Paragraph 4 (b) of Article 21 recognizes that "domestic policies directed towards the fulfilment of a Member's obligations . . . relating to the achievement and maintenance of full and productive employment" may involve the Member in balance of payments difficulties and therefore justify resort to quantitative regulation of import trade. It also provides that a Member shall not be required to withdraw or modify

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The Charter had another fundamental defect. Even the most doctrinaire liberal trade enthusiasts knew well enough that the international trading system they hoped for could not exist in the economic conditions of the postwar period. To meet this difficulty, the conference drew up two sets of rules, one to apply in a world of normal economic conditions, the other to apply in a "transitional" period during which most countries would be engaged in the task of postwar reconstruction. The history and implications of the word "normal," as used in political and economic discussion, would make an interesting subject for research. At any time in the last thirty years, the great majority of politicians, bankers, and popular writers on economic subjects have been in agreement on one point: the abnormality of existing economic conditions. There is, however, little attempt to define a normal economic situation. One is tempted to deduce, from what is commonly designated abnormal, that economic normality exists when balances of payments really do balance, when demand and supply, cost and prices, investment and savings, are in equilibrium or tending toward equilibrium, when there is only transitional unemployment, and when there is a steady increase in productivity. Normality, it seems, is a situation which never occurs.

It may be suspected that the hankering after normality is a symptom of this generation's loss of faith in the idea of progress. Such economic change as it sees it dislikes; therefore, it clings to the belief that in time past—before the war, before the depression, before the planners—there was a Golden Age which was normality. (Sir Arthur Salter's best-seller of the great depression was significantly entitled *Recovery*.)

This obsession with normality is not a harmless oddity of our time; it is the cause of much unrealistic thinking and a constant excuse for putting off action to a tomorrow which never comes. Mr. Neville Chamberlain, promising year after year to restore the gold standard when things were normal, yet all the time moving away from his objective, is the prototype of

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restrictions on trade on the grounds that a change in domestic policy relating to full employment would make the restrictions unnecessary.

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economic statesmanship in our time. At Geneva, the representatives of seventeen nations, with only a cursory glance at the world around them, pledged themselves to restore multilateral non-discriminatory trade when, in due course, normality returned. Nothing showed more clearly the effects of this approach on men's grasp of realities than the Geneva conference's reaction to the sterling area crisis of August 1947. Here was an event which ought to have forced it to a radical reassessment of its whole scheme of action. The restoration of sterling convertibility had been, like ITO itself, a part of the grand design for bringing economic order to the postwar world. Like ITO, it was based on the assumption that the international economic situation, though still serious, had improved sufficiently to enable a cautious beginning with the lifting of controls. The swift and unexpected collapse of convertibility showed that the makers of economic policy in London and Washington were disastrously astray in their grasp of postwar realities. But, astonishing as it may seem, the August crises scarcely disturbed the conference's rhythm of commissions, committees, and subcommittees. Its principal concern was with the future; reality belonged to the transitional period.

The ITO project (and, for that matter, all attempts in the last thirty years to establish a more satisfactory system of international trade) would have achieved much more substantial results if governments and those who influence public opinion had laid hold of the simple truth that economic institutions and practices are in a constant process of becoming something different. For those who set out to control or influence economic affairs, the necessary first step is to know a great deal about institutions, practices, and trends. But postwar planning ignored these things, or tried to; from the publication of Article VII onward, the objective was to draw up a code of trading practices embodying certain moral and political preconceptions; the question whether this code bore any relationship to contemporary political and economic developments was quite inadequately considered. The provision for a transitional period merely accentuated the unreality of this approach, for it was always clear that what happened in the transitional period would be a

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far more powerful determinant of what happened after the end of this period than any code of rules based on ideas of what ought to happen.

No retrospect of the Geneva conference would be complete which did not take account of one unconscious paradox. The liberal trade enthusiasts argued that administrative regulation of trade was inherently bad because no administrative mechanism could respond sensitively to the nuances of a market situation. In essence, it was the argument of Mises and Hayek against "socialist calculation." But it apparently did not occur to the liberal traders that, by building up a code defining discrimination and the permissible exceptions to the rule of nondiscrimination, defining restrictive business practices and the circumstances in which they might be permitted, establishing rules for State trading, defining the permissible uses of subsidies, defining the permissible uses of quota restrictions, and in a multitude of other ways trying to translate economic liberalism into specific rules, they were falling into the very error they condemned and hopelessly overestimating the possibilities of administrative regulation. Anyone who thinks that this overstates the case against the Charter of ITO would do well to read, say, Articles 22 and 23, which set out rules for the nondiscriminatory administration of quantitative restrictions and the exceptions to those rules. The truth is that, early in its course, the Geneva conference lost touch with the realities it was supposed to be dealing with and lived in a world of words where all problems were solved by adroit draftsmanship.

For some time it has been clear that the United States administration does not intend to seek Senate ratification of the ITO Charter, which almost certainly means that it is dead. There need be no regrets on this account, for even if the Charter were sound and consistent in its basic thinking, which it is not, it is so complex that difficulties of interpretation alone would have made it an unsatisfactory instrument of international cooperation. The future of GATT—the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade—is less certain. This agreement and the organization based on it were set up at Geneva in 1947 to fill the gap between the Geneva conference and the coming

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into existence of the International Trade Organization; and the agreement embodies, in a modified form, such provisions of the Charter as were considered necessary to prevent tariff concessions from being nullified by unjustifiable restrictive practices. GATT has held eight meetings since 1947 and its original membership of seventeen has more than doubled. In the main, its work has fallen under three headings—continuation and extension of the tariff negotiations begun at Geneva, discussion of complaints of unfair trade practices, and the formulation of a code of standard practices for the administration of import and export restrictions and exchange controls. The value of work done under the first heading is hard to assess, partly because of its extreme complexity and partly because tariff concessions may have little significance when most of the countries concerned are applying import restrictions and exchange controls. Latterly, however, signatories have been unwilling to go further along the road of tariff reduction and some have sought to revoke concessions made at Geneva. On present indications, GATT is not likely to make further headway with tariff reduction. Work under the other two headings is limited but useful. It is undoubtedly a benefit to have some central body where complaints against unfair or unnecessary restrictions can be heard, and there is some evidence that complaints do have some effect on the administrative practices of member States. Moreover, if the code of standard practices for the administration of import and export restrictions and exchange controls is ratified by members, there should be a substantial lessening of the difficulties in the way of international trade.

In the long run, however, the success of GATT and of all attempts to evolve a workable international policy for the promotion of trade depends on whether the governments of the principal trading nations are capable of realistic thinking about the present situation and present economic trends. For the shelving of ITO is not an example of the perversity of Congress; it represents, as I have tried to show, the inevitable collapse of an enterprise which tried to base international economic order on a norm of national behavior bearing too little relationship to what governments were thinking and doing in the con-

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temporary world. Because they are cosmopolitan and work in no particular tradition, international conferences are especially prone to what Mr. Michael Oakeshott has called the fallacy of political rationalism. And the fallacy asserts itself most strongly in economic matters, for it does not seem to be sufficiently understood that a country's economic institutions and methods of trade are as much a part of its national make-up as are its politics. No one would suggest that countries which join the United Nations should be required to select their governments in a particular way; but a country which had found by experience that quantitative regulation suited its economy better than tariffs as a method of controlling trade was in very real danger of being banned from ITO.

This is not a plea that we should surrender to the forces of tradition. The art of policy-making resembles the art of navigation in the days of sailing ships. It is open to the navigator to make a rational choice of destination, but his success in getting there will depend on the accuracy and completeness of his knowledge of winds, tides, and currents. Successful policy-making requires the same supplementing of rational choice of an end with a knowledge of the forces which will help or hinder progress toward that end. In this matter of trade, the most significant fact to be grasped is the great and growing importance of the State as a directing and organizing power in economic life and the consequent predominance of State policies and interests in the economic field. This is a very obvious fact, yet it is the continuing illusion of those who promote international conferences on economic matters that States acting in concert will subscribe to policies which are incompatible with their own domestic policies. The lesson should have been learned on July 3, 1933, when President Roosevelt torpedoed the World Economic Conference with a single sentence: "The sound internal economic system of a nation is a greater factor in its well-being than the price of its currency in changing terms of the currencies of other nations." In effect, the President was serving notice on the world that his administration's plans to bring about internal economic stability would not be subordinated to proposals for international stabilization of currency values. Eco-

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nomic stability and full employment are now dominant objectives of social policy in almost all countries, and it is through the State that these objectives are pursued, since the State is the only institution which possesses the authority and the resources of organization necessary for the ordering of economic activity.[12] The pursuit of economic stability and full employment within national units is probably a hindrance to trade; and it may be that in time governments will realize that, without a greater degree of international collaboration, stability can be achieved only at the cost of an elaborate system of controls and some sacrifice of national wealth. But, for the present, the quest for national economic stability is a fact which must be accepted as limiting and defining the possibilities of international action to promote trade. No country which has instituted economic controls in the interests of stability is likely to abandon those controls in the interests of an increase in the quantum of world trade. Moreover, the dominance of stability as a social objective is likely to mean that international collaboration in matters of trade will in future be directed not toward eliminating or modifying national controls but toward making those controls more effective by coordinating and harmonizing them by international action.

The primary commodities field provides an interesting illustration of this last point. In the period between the two world wars, prices of primary commodities fluctuated so widely and were in general so low in relation to production costs that State marketing organizations designed to stabilize returns to producers became the rule in almost all countries with large primary industries. But the stability possible through State marketing organizations is at best short-term, and it is therefore natural to consider as a next step a coming-together of State marketing organizations to form an organization capable of controlling prices and quantities of commodities entering into international trade. The International Wheat Agreement is an example of this type of development. The war in Korea and

[12] For a fuller examination of the implications of the full-employment policy in relation to international trade and the ITO project, see John H. Williams, "International Trade with Planned Economies," *Proceedings*, Academy of Political Science, May 1947.

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the rearmament program have given a new urgency to the problem of the international trade in commodities. Heavy and erratic buying, particularly by the United States, has had unhappy results for the economies of Western Europe and the British Dominions. It is clear, for instance, that the recent difficulties of the sterling area are in no small degree due to the rapid inflation of the Australian economy by fantastically high wool prices. If commodity prices and supplies are not brought under international control, as was done during the last war, the Western nations will continue to move from one crisis to another. There is no question here of controls or no controls. It is a question of inefficient national controls or more efficient international controls.[13]

The emphasis on economic stability and full employment as objectives of national economic policies carries us in the direction of another of Keynes' "instrumentalities for orderly economic life"—quantitative regulation of imports. Recurring balance of payments difficulties are, as we have seen, an unavoidable consequence of such policies, at any rate in the present stage of national economic management. As an instrument for dealing with balance of payments disequilibria, quantitative controls are preferable to other devices. Exchange variations of a sufficient magnitude to be quickly effective are virtually excluded by the rules of the International Monetary Fund, and in any case the exchange rate has in most economies ceased to be a flexible instrument. Tariffs are out of the question for somewhat similar reasons, and their effects are likely to be undesirably permanent. Quantitative regulation, on the other hand, can be used with a reasonable degree of precision (assuming that forecasts of balance of payments trends are fairly accurate) and can be imposed, varied, or removed at short notice. It has the further advantage that it does not raise the domestic prices of imported commodities unless it is maintained over long periods or is severe enough to give rise to black markets.

[13] See "Measures for International Economic Stability," Report by a Group of Experts appointed by the Secretary General of the United Nations, New York, 1951, Chapter 2, for a discussion of the possibilities of commodity agreements as instruments for promoting economic stability.

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The case against quantitative controls becomes stronger when they are used to protect domestic industries or when, although imposed for balance of payments reasons, they are maintained for so long that vested interests are built up behind them. An important objective of international economic policy should therefore be to reduce the length and frequency of balance of payments crises. When import controls are first imposed, they are politically unpopular and there is political credit to be gained by removing them. Beyond a certain point of time, however, they become more or less accepted by consumers, and industries which have gained incidental protection begin to agitate for their retention. The problem of reducing the length and frequency of balance of payments crises is partly domestic and partly international. Governments with full-employment economies are gradually becoming more skilled in reading the signs of excessive demand and in applying remedies. The aspect of the problem which is within the field of international action is the availability of monetary reserves to meet an actual or anticipated drain. Some direct experience of official techniques of handling balance of payments situations (both nationally and on a sterling area basis) has convinced me that most balance of payments crises are administratively accentuated and that some are the result not of any objective reality in the world of trade, but of a particular mental state in a group of officials. Because very few countries have currency reserves which are adequate in relation to the volume of their external trade and payments, officials are oversensitive to any adverse tendency and brake heavily at the first danger sign. Sometimes the danger sign is in fact merely an error in estimating—in which connection it should be remembered that the constant tendency of Treasury and Central Bank officials, in reporting to governments, is to make their errors on the side of gloom. If the situation develops more favorably than they had prophesied, this can always be set to the credit of good management by the government. The oversensitivity of the bureaucracy to changes in the balance of payments could be substantially reduced by international action to create a more adequate central currency reserve. The failure

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of the International Monetary Fund to meet this need has had far more serious consequences than are commonly realized.[14]

For those who have had experience in administering controls over international trade, this prospect of international regulation of prices and supplies of basic commodities is not at all inviting. But the future will be less grim if we recognize that the problem is one which concerns the science of administration as much as it concerns the science of economics. It is regrettable that the academic literature of international trade is almost wholly deficient on the side of administrative techniques and institutions—regrettable but not surprising, since the general assumption has been that controls over trade are a passing phenomenon. It is important that this aspect of the problem should now receive careful attention, if only to demonstrate the fallacy of blanket assumptions either that administrative controls are inherently bad and restrictive or that they are in all cases a substitution of order for chaos. At both the national and international levels, decisions as to whether to institute particular controls ought to be based not merely on a consideration of economic factors, but also on an examination of the nature of the administrative task involved and the administrative resources available. To take an obvious point, the administrative task is greatly simplified where, over a reasonably long period, cooperative or State trading organizations have established themselves and built up skilled staffs. Wool, wheat, meat, dairy products, tallow, and hides and skins are for this reason relatively easily controlled, as was shown in the last war. On the other hand, quantitative regulation of imports of manufactures presents administrative problems which have yet to be solved, mainly because of the variety of commodities involved, the lack of central organizations at the distributive end, and the lack of persons who have administrative competence in this field and are not identified with particular trading interests. One of the essentials of successful import control is that it should be selective, but at the present stage of development of administrative techniques selective control is an impossibility except by very

[14] Suggestions as to how the IMF could be made to function more effectively are advanced in *ibid.*, Chapter 4.

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broad categories. This is because few countries have yet attempted to classify imports according to the requirements of quantitative regulation. In most cases selection is based on customs schedules, which are unsuitable for this purpose.

The administrative problem is not, as I have already suggested, solely or mainly one of techniques; it is also psychological. The pressure under which officials work causes them to react in stereotyped ways to economic emergencies, and the nature of their responsibilities predisposes them to certain types of error and exaggeration. Particularly in the field of international trade and payments, the part played in the development of economic situations by these sterotypes and habitual errors of bureaucracy is much greater than is commonly understood. An historical analysis of the sterling area's postwar balance of payments crises written from this point of view would, I believe, throw much light on our present difficulties and would in addition help to make administrators more objectively conscious of their own processes.

This is not a case for more and better controls. It is a plea to liberals to recognize that, by turning their backs on reality and hoping for the revival of a system which cannot be revived, they have not avoided controls. They have merely succeeded in persuading themselves and others that controls are temporary and that therefore it is not worth while, and may even be dangerous, to try to make them work better. As a result most controls over trade are ill-conceived, ill-administered, and unnecessarily complicated. The future of the free society, which is the principal concern of liberals, cannot be assured by preferring instability to any extension of the State's authority, for in the last analysis a people will prefer authority.

In any case, it is possible that the attempt to facilitate and expand international trade by international action has been hampered by an excessive concentration on methods and by unwise attempts on the part of one generation to decide what sort of system will best serve the needs of another. It may be that, by concentrating on international objectives which require incidentally an expansion of trade if they are to be realized—for instance, the development of economically backward countries

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and the more adequate mobilization of the resources of the free world—we shall make more progress than by concentrating on trade as an end in itself.

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THE BALANCE OF POWER:
Prescription, Concept, or Propaganda?

By ERNST B. HAAS

Re-emergence of the Balance of Power Concept

"THE Soviet Union is now engaged in an audacious attempt to upset the established balance of power prevailing in Europe." This statement was used by C. L. Sulzberger, writing in the *New York Times* for March 23, 1952, to open a discussion of the Soviet offer to establish a unified and neutral Germany. It symbolizes the startling renaissance of the balance of power concept in recent years not only in the pages of learned journals, but in the daily press and in radio as well. This rebirth is probably attributable to the effort to reconsider the notions concerning international relations generally held during the League of Nations period, notions which emphasized open diplomacy, collective security, and the use of arbitration instead of unilateral force. The apparent futility of these methods seemed to call for the reintroduction of more meaningful concepts into the analysis of international affairs, and the balance of power thus reappeared as part of the general trend to re-establish the primacy of power as the key to the understanding of interstate relations.

There would be no difficulty in this development if the term "balance of power" were free from philological, semantic, and theoretical confusion. Unfortunately, it is not. The term is defined differently by different writers; it is used in varying senses, even if not defined exactly at all; and, finally, it is the focal concept in several quite distinct theories of international relations. The purpose of this article is the clarification, not only of the *verbal* differences in meaning, but also of the *applied meanings* of the "balance of power" phrase as they vary in accordance with the intentions of the users. The necessity for such an attempt may be demonstrated by an introductory discussion of the variety of thought on this topic, in terms of substantive meanings no less than in terms of systems of classification.

Thus Leopold Ranke and Bishop Stubbs regarded the bal-

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ance of power as the principle in modern history which weaves otherwise unintelligibly divergent strands into an understandable whole. The balance "is the principle which gives unity to the political plot of European history," said Stubbs.[1] Richard Cobden, by contrast, was constrained to propound that

> The balance of power—which has, for a hundred years, been the burden of kings' speeches, the theme of statesmen, the ground of solemn treaties, and the cause of wars—which has served down to the very year in which we write [1836], and which will, no doubt, continue to serve, for years to come, as a pretence for maintaining enormous standing armaments . . . the balance of power is a chimera: It is not a fallacy, a mistake, an imposture—it is an undescribed, indescribable, incomprehensible nothing; mere words, conveying to the mind not ideas, but sounds, like those equally barren syllables which our ancestors put together for the purpose of puzzling themselves about words. . . .[2]

One writer is certain the concept holds the key to understanding modern history; the other is equally convinced that it never had any actual historical existence at all. Other analysts—for instance, Gulick—are willing to concede that

> Balance of power policies today have a continuous history dating back to the time of the Italian Renaissance. . . . The origin of the modern development of the Balance of Power coincided with the growth of the present state system. . . . It [the doctrine] spread rapidly to the rest of Europe in the wake of the development of the nation-states, and soon became one of the cardinal tenets of diplomacy throughout the West.

On the other hand, the same writers hasten to demonstrate that the theory of the balance of power—theories, would be more accurate—is not only illogical, but fallacious because it cannot efficiently realize policy aims, and harmful because it runs counter to moral law.[3] And, finally, while Gulick considers the theory as having a definite historical reality but as being fallacious, a very large number of writers since the Renaissance have not only insisted on the fact that the theory has been the mainspring of actual diplomatic decisions, but have concerned

1 W. Stubbs, *Seventeen Lectures on the Study of Medieval and Modern History*, Oxford, 1886, p. 225.

2 R. Cobden, *Political Writings*, London, 1878, pp. 111-14.

3 E. V. Gulick, *The Balance of Power*, Philadelphia, 1943, pp. 14-15; A. F. Pollard, "The Balance of Power," *Journal of the British Institute on International Affairs*, II (1923), pp. 60ff.

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themselves with perfecting over-all theories of international relations on the basis of the balance of power. That the use of both the term and the theory is not free from semantic difficulties has not escaped the attention of Alfred Stern, for one. Stern noted that the term, in one breath, is used to describe an objective state of affairs, while in the next it implies a guide to the making of foreign policy. In one instance it means an equality of power, in the next a slight superiority, in the words of the same speaker or writer. "Usually the tendency is to use it in the former sense in peace time and in the latter during a time of diplomatic crisis or warfare," concludes Stern.[4] Clearly, the meaning of the term is obscured by the varying intentions of writers employing it. Apologists for a given policy are likely to resort to one meaning, while advocates of a radically new policy tend to emphasize others. The very vagueness of the term commends its application in the rough-and-tumble of policy-making in a democracy.

These multifarious usages have given rise to several attempts to classify both the meanings of the term and the theories associated with them. Thus Bucher, investigating only its philological meanings, reached the conclusion that the term has three connotations: "balance" meaning an exact equality of political forces, in a two-state system; "balance" meaning the existence, in a three-state system, of two approximately equal forces, with a third one "holding the balance," i.e., enabling whichever side it decides to join to win the conflict; and "balance" meaning the same thing as hegemony, contradictory though this may sound.[5] Kaeber analyzed the content of numerous formulations of the theory and thought that this general classification is adequate: theories stating the term to mean the exact equality of two contending states, or state systems; theories implying such a distribution of power, in a multi-state system, that no single state would be able, with impunity, to overawe the other states; and "balance" meaning the existence of two contending state systems, with a third state again "holding the balance."[6]

[4] A. Stern, "Das politische Gleichgewicht," *Archiv für Politik und Geschichte*, IV (1923), pp. 48-49.

[5] L. Bucher, "Über politische Kunstausdrücke. II. Politisches Gleichgewicht," *Deutsche Revue*, XII (1887), pp. 333-39.

[6] E. Kaeber, *Die Idee des Europäischen Gleichgewichts in der publizistischen Literatur*

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Professor Hans Morgenthau, himself a well-known exponent of the balance of power theory, states that the term may carry these meanings in technical discussion: (1) a policy aimed at bringing about a certain power distribution; (2) a description of any actual state of affairs in international politics; (3) an approximately equal distribution of power internationally; and (4) a term describing any distribution of political power in international relations. When he states his own formulation of the theory and its meaning, it acquires the significance of a universal law of history.[7] Professor Quincy Wright, on the other hand, distinguishes between a "static balance of power" and a "dynamic" one. A static balance is "the condition which accounts for the continued coexistence of independent governments in contact with one another," whereas a dynamic balance "characterizes the policies adopted by governments to maintain that condition." This formulation is based on the assumption that states will inevitably struggle among themselves for predominance and aggrandizement, the index of power being the military potential. The static balance exists automatically—in close analogy to the equilibrium in mechanics—among all states seeking self-preservation and aggrandizement, without planning or analysis. The dynamic policy can be adopted only after conscious thought, implying that the statesmen so acting have some regard for the welfare of the community of states rather than for their self-preservation alone, and here the analogy to physics ends. It is the static sense of the definition, claims Professor Wright, which has enjoyed a large measure of actual historical application, while he is ready to admit that under contemporary conditions the entire theory has ceased to be wholly applicable.[8] It is apparent not only that the precise meaning of the term is in dispute, but that there is no agreement on the classification of the various meanings and their theoretical implications.

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vom 16. bis zur Mitte des 18. Jahrhunderts, Berlin, 1906, pp. 22-25, 31-33, 33-35; see also E. Nys, "La théorie de l'équilibre européen," *Revue de droit international et de législation comparée*, XXV (1893), pp. 49-54.

[7] H. J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, New York, 1948, pp. 125, 134-45.

[8] Q. Wright, *A Study of War*, Chicago, 1942, II, pp. 743-66.

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Classification of Verbal Meanings

The problem of classifying and analyzing the significance of these varying usages of the term "balance of power" is twofold. On the primary level, it is necessary to differentiate as precisely as possible between the various shades of verbal meaning given to the term by statesmen and commentators. Following this process, it will then be possible to classify and analyze these meanings in terms of the purposes—theoretical and practical—which the users of the phrase may have had in mind. Significance can thus be given to the revived balance of power concept in terms of the motivations impelling its proponents.

Among the various meanings of the term "balance of power," one of the more common is a mere factual description of the distribution of political power in the international scene at any one time. But, in another sense, the term is used to mean a theoretical principle acting as a guide to foreign policy-making in any and all international situations, so that the preponderance of any one state may be avoided. Expanding this notion and assuming that almost all states guide their policies by this principle, a general system of the balance of power is thought to come about, a system in which each participating state has a certain role. Such a system may take the form of two or more power blocs in mutual opposition to each other and it may exist with or without the benefit of a balancer, i.e., a state willing and able to throw its weight on either scale of the balance, to speak in terms of the classical metaphor, and thus presumably bring about the diplomatic or military victory of the bloc so supported, or possibly prevent any change in existing conditions. In addition to these various shades of theoretical meaning implying some sort of system, the term "balance of power" has frequently been used to describe the existence of a political equilibrium, i.e., such a distribution of power that each state (or each major state) is the approximate equal of every other. On the other hand, the term is commonly employed to connote the exact opposite of the equilibrium notion; it then comes to be identical with a notion of hegemony. Still other commentators insist on the presence of general historical laws of the balance of power,

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a notion to which the term "natural law" has been given by some. By this they mean that the search for hegemony by one state will inevitably be met by a coalition of all other states, thus forming a "counterweight" against political preponderance and tending to re-establish the *status quo ante*. And, finally, balance of power very frequently means power politics generally and the establishment of certain military and strategic conditions specifically. Some writers equate the term with peace, others with war. This general differentiation now remains to be supported with apposite illustrative citations.[9]

(1) *Balance meaning "Distribution of Power."* The simplest and most commonly found use of the term "balance of power" occurs in plain descriptive statements. Thus when Bolingbroke wrote that "Our Charles the First was no great politician, and yet he seemed to discern that the balance of power was turning in favor of France, some years before the treaty of Westphalia . . . ,"[10] he was merely saying that the Stuart ruler was noticing that the power of France was increasing as compared to that of Britain. Or, again, Henry Wallace once remarked that Japan's joining the Axis meant

> that the old balance of power upon which the U.S. relied for safety is now gone. Only if we are speedy and efficient in our defense can we keep aggressor nations, or any combination of them, from coming to this country. . . . The old balance of power under which the Monroe Doctrine was easily defended is gone. We must look to our own defenses, relying on ourselves to repel any aggression.[11]

Balance of power, in usages such as these, means no more than

[9] It is of some significance that the terminological confusion is not confined to Western writing. Raymond L. Garthoff has shown that even though the Russian political vocabulary has separate expressions for most of the usages cited, in practice loose application creates exactly the same difficulty as in English so far as classification and analysis are concerned. Garthoff concludes that, from an examination of 250 citations using some form of balance of power expression, this summary can be made: 136 instances of balance meaning general "relation of forces," especially in the class struggle; 87 instances meaning a "general distribution" of power; 17 instances of balance meaning "equilibrium"; and 10 instances of balance meaning "preponderance" or hegemony. In discussions of international relations, the Soviet use of the term "balance of power" generally connotes an equilibrium of forces between the "imperialist" and "socialist" worlds, and is therefore associated with short-term policies of peaceful coexistence. "The Concept of the Balance of Power in Soviet Policy-Making," *World Politics*, IV (October 1951), pp. 88-90, 102-3, 108-9.

[10] Bolingbroke, *Works*, Philadelphia, 1841, II, p. 257.

[11] U.P. despatch in *Los Angeles Times*, September 1940, cited in Alfred Vagts, "The Balance of Power: Growth of an Idea," *World Politics*, I (October 1948), p. 86.

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distribution of power. It does not connote any "balancing" of weights at all. When a statesman says that the "balance of power has shifted," he wants to say that his opponent has grown more powerful than was the case previously.

(2) *Balance meaning "Equilibrium."* An imposing array of politicians and political scientists has urged that the term "balance of power" means what it seems to imply to the uninitiated layman: an exact equilibrium of power between two or more contending parties. Wrote Réal de Curban, for instance:

> Speaking generally, the rulers regard Europe as a balance in which the heaviest side subdues the other side and believe that in order to retain Europe in a solid and peaceful condition it is necessary to maintain between the principal parties this point of equilibrium, which, preventing either side of the balance from sinking, proves that they are on an exactly equal level. . . . The House of France and the House of Austria have been regarded as the scales of the balance of Europe. One or the other of these scales have received their support from England and Holland, which acted as the balancers.[12]

His distinguished compatriots, Duplessis-Mornay and Rohan, agreed with this postulation in important seventeenth-century pamphlets on the nature of the balance of power, recommending, by the way, that the Bourbons subdue the Habsburgs in order to achieve this much-vaunted equilibrium.[13] In Germany Konstantin Frantz, in 1859, urged the same definition and denounced the Vienna settlement for not having permitted Prussia and Austria to gain equality of power with the other three major states.[14] This juxtaposition of arguments gives considerable support to Professor Pollard's conclusion that the meaning of equilibrium should be taken with a great deal of reserve:

> One has a shrewd suspicion that those who believe in a balance of power, do so because they think it is like a balance at the bank, something better than mere equality, an advantage which they possess. Unconsciously they have both meanings in their minds when they

[12] Réal de Curban, *La science du gouvernement*, Paris, 1764, VI, pp. 443ff.

[13] Henri de Rohan, *De l'intérest des princes et estats de la Chréstienté*; Duplessis-Mornay, *Sur les moyens de diminuer l'Espagnol*; both cited in A. de Stieglitz, *De l'équilibre politique, du légitimisme et du principe des nationalités*, Paris, 1893-1897, I, pp. 21ff. This work contains brief analyses of all the major pamphlets and treatises on the balance of power before 1800, and an analysis of the opinions of most writers on international law since Grotius.

[14] K. Frantz, *Untersuchungen über das Europäische Gleichgewicht*, cited in K. Jacob, "Die Chimäre des Gleichgewichts," *Archiv für Urkundenforschung*, VI (1918), pp. 359-60.

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use the phrase. The equality-meaning commends it as propaganda; the advantage is a mental reservation for private use. Statesmen and publicists have sometimes betrayed an uneasy consciousness of the ambiguity and incautiously talked about a just, good, or proper balance of power, admitting thereby that a mere balance was not good enough; and an eighteenth century biographer of Cardinal Wolsey lets the cat out of the bag when he refers to "that grand rule, whereby the counsels of England should always be guided, of preserving the balance of power *in her hands.*"[15]

These formulations of the balance of power as a purely external and international equilibrium between contending states or blocs of states take no account of the possible existence of a similar relationship between contending groups within the state. Such an addition to the theory, however, was furnished by Harold Lasswell.[16] Lasswell speaks of a balancing of power rather than a "balance," since the attempt toward equilibrium can never be a wholly successful one, owing to various non-objective factors which interfere with scientific balancing. Lasswell rounds out the conventional presentation of the search for equilibrium by pointing to the domestic political process as offering a parallel spectacle. Furthermore, he establishes a relationship between the domestic and international balancing processes by describing liaison and support between various societal groups in one state, working with or against certain other groups in the opposing state or in the "balancer" state.

(3) *Balance meaning "Hegemony."* This analysis leads easily to the meaning of balance of power equivalent to hegemony. Examples from the literature are numerous and only two will be given: one from the eighteenth century and one modern. Thus, the Count of Hauterive, a pamphleteer for Napoleon I, argued that the balance of power demanded Napoleon's breaking the Treaty of Campo Formio, to enable France to bring about a confederation of the continent against England and in this way reduce the hegemonial superiority of Britain on the seas and, incidentally, establish the hegemony of France.[17] And

[15] Pollard, *op.cit.*, p. 59 (italics in original).

[16] H. D. Lasswell, *World Politics and Personal Insecurity*, New York, 1935, ch. III.

[17] Hauterive, *De l'état de la France à la fin de l'an VIII*, cited in Stern, *op.cit.*, p. 32.

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Napoleon himself, in December of 1813, expressed his desire for a peace "based on the balance of rights and interests"![18]

Nicholas Spykman also understood the balance of power as implying a search for hegemony. His thesis—that all states seek a hegemonial position and therefore are in more or less continual conflict with each other—has for its natural corollary that this conflict, if it stops short of total war, has to result in some sort of equilibrium. This, however, can never be stable, because statesmen do not seek "balance" but hegemony:

> The truth of the matter is that states are interested only in a balance which is in their favor. Not an equilibrium, but a generous margin is their objective. There is no real security in being just as strong as a potential enemy; there is security only in being a little stronger. There is no possibility of action if one's strength is fully checked; there is a chance for a positive foreign policy only if there is a margin of force which can be freely used. Whatever the theory and the rationalization, the practical objective is the constant improvement of the state's own relative power position. The balance desired is the one which neutralizes other states, leaving the home state free to be the deciding force and the deciding voice.[19]

Should equilibrium be attained at one point, it would immediately be wiped out by the search for slight superiority.

(4) *Balance meaning "Stability" and "Peace."* A number of analysts have persisted in identifying what they have called the "balance of power" with the kind of idyllic world they desire to establish. They do not mean that the balance of power is a method for realizing peace and stability, but that peace and stability are identical with a balance of power. Typical of this approach is Francis Gould Leckie.[20] Leckie's tome is free from the usual recommendations of balancing the power of state A against state B, with states C and D holding the balance between them. He confines himself to recommending that feudal succession law be abolished and Europe go in for large-scale colonization in Africa and America, thus creating a "stable balance of power." At other times he does, however, lapse into more conventional meanings of the balance—an inconsistency unfortu-

[18] L. Donnadieu, *Essai sur la théorie d'équilibre*, Paris, 1900, p. 111.

[19] N. Spykman, *America's Strategy in World Politics*, New York, 1942, pp. 21-25.

[20] F. G. Leckie, *An Historical Research into the Nature of the Balance of Power in Europe*, London, 1817, pp. 4, 242ff., 292, 303, 350ff.

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nately found all too frequently in these writings. Similarly, Olof Höijer tends to use the term in this sense, arguing that whenever the powers decided peace was desirable and should be maintained on a given issue—e.g., the London Conference of 1830-1839—a true balance of power existed, though to some analysts it might appear as if here the term "concert" might be more appropriate.[21]

(5) *Balance meaning "Instability" and "War."* Occasionally, by contrast, we find writers using the term "balance of power" as being synonymous with the very kind of world conditions they abhor: war, intervention, competition, and instability. Thus the Abbé de Pradt argued that the balance of power means war, while peace is identical with the settling of all issues on their moral, economic, and ethnographic merits.[22] This approach is also typical of that extraordinary eighteenth-century writer, Johann Gottlob Justi, of Cobden and Bright, of the elder Mirabeau, and of Kant, who called the balance of power a *Hirngespinst*.[23] It is true of de Pradt, however, that he tends to identify "balance of power" with power politics generally, a very common identification indeed.

(6) *Balance meaning "Power Politics" generally.* Edmund Waller once exclaimed:

> Heav'n that has plac'd this island to give law,
> To balance Europe and her states to awe.

"Balance" in this jingle comes to mean the exertion of power pure and simple. And as the anonymous author of *The Present State of Europe* (ed. of 1757) stated, "The struggle for the balance of power, in effect, is the struggle for power."[24] Power, politics of pure power, *Realpolitik*, and the balance of power are here merged into one concept, the concept that state survival in a competitive international world demands the use of power uninhibited by moral considerations. Lord Bolingbroke, in his fascinating *Letters on the Study and Use of History*, expressed similar ideas. He argued, in effect, that the concept of the balance of power was simply an eminently practical contrivance

[21] O. Höijer, *La théorie de l'équilibre et le droit des gens*, Paris, 1917, pp. 52-59.
[22] D. de Pradt, *Du Congrès de Vienne*, Paris, 1815, 1, pp. 67-69, 75ff., 84ff., 95, 104.
[23] Stern, *op.cit.*, pp. 31-34.
[24] Bucher, *op.cit.*, pp. 336, 338.

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by which the states of Europe could determine when to combine in defensive alliances against whichever state seemed to be working for hegemony, to "endanger their liberties," i.e., to absorb them. Since this desire was thought to be inherent in either France or Austria at all times, the balance of power comes to mean any power combination to stop "aggression."[25]

This formulation of the term is commonly expanded to include all the factors making for state power, and especially military installations, military potentials, and strategic positions. State A's position in the balance of power is "good" after the construction of a given line of fortresses, or "bad" if that line is obliterated by boundary changes. The point need not be labored. Use of the term "balance of power" in this very commonly employed meaning signifies the over-all power position of states in an international scene dominated by power politics. States are pictured as fighting for power, and only for power—for whatever reasons—and the struggle in or for a balance of power is equivalent to the power political process as a whole. Balance of power here is not to be understood as a refinement of the general process of power politics, but as being identical with it.

(7) *Balance as implying a "Universal Law of History."* John Bassett Moore once wrote that

> What is called the balance of power is merely a manifestation of the primitive instinct of "self-defense," which tends to produce combinations in all human affairs, national as well as international, and which so often manifests itself in aggression. Not only was the Civil War in the United States the result of a contest over the balance of power but the fact is notorious that certain sections of the country have, during past generations, constantly found themselves in general relations of mutual support because of a continuing common interest in a single question.[26]

The point of departure of these usages is again the assumed inevitable and natural struggle among states for preponderance, and the equally natural resistance to such attempts. Given these two considerations, it follows that as long as they continue in

[25] Bolingbroke, *op.cit.*, pp. 249, 258, 266, 291; W. T. R. Fox, *The Super Powers*, New York, 1944, pp. 161ff.

[26] J. B. Moore, *International Law and Some Current Illusions*, New York, 1924, p. 310.

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force, there is bound to be a "balance" of states seeking aggrandizement and states opposing that search. In Frederick L. Schuman's version of the balance, there is a tendency for all revisionist states to line up against the ones anxious to conserve given treaties, and in Professor Morgenthau's analysis the "imperialistic" states tend to line up against those defending the status quo, producing a balance in the process.[27] It is often inherent in this formulation to consider Europe as a great "confederation" unified by homogeneous morals and religion and tied together by international law. The balance of power struggle, equally, is part of that system and tends toward its preservation by avoiding the hegemony of a single member. And, of course, it is in this formulation that the analogy to the mechanical balance is most frequently found. As Rousseau put it:

> The nations of Europe form among themselves a tacit nation. . . . The actual system of Europe has precisely the degree of solidity which maintains it in a constant state of motion without upsetting it. The balance existing between the power of these diverse members of the European society is more the work of nature than of art. It maintains itself without effort, in such a manner that if it sinks on one side, it reestablishes itself very soon on the other. . . . This system of Europe is maintained by the constant vigilance which observes each disturbance of the balance of power.[28]

Ratzel gave this outlook a geographical orientation by arguing that during the "youth period" of states, a continuous process of expansion and contraction in a given *Raum* takes place, ending in a natural balance between the youthful contenders.[29] Whether in this version or without the benefit of geopolitical notions, the theory is a widely held one, corresponding roughly to what Professor Wright calls the "static balance of power." It was stated in detail by Donnadieu, who claimed that

> "Destiny takes along him who consents and draws along him who refuses!" said Rabelais. The balance of power is one of these necessary forces; in other words, it is the expression of a law in the life of nations.[30]

[27] Morgenthau, *op.cit.*, passim; also F. L. Schuman, *International Politics*, New York, 1941, pp. 281ff.

[28] J. J. Rousseau, *Extrait du projet de paix perpetuelle de M. l'abbé de Saint-Pierre*, cited in Donnadieu, *op.cit.*, pp. 9-10.

[29] F. Ratzel, *Politische Geographie*, Munich, 1903, cited in Kaeber, *op.cit.*, p. 4.

[30] Donnadieu, *op.cit.*, p. xx. See also the description of Sir Eyre Crowe in the famous State Paper of 1907, in which the "universal law" approach predominates.

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In the hands of Albert Sorel the universal law version of the balance of power underwent further sophistication. In the first place, Sorel made no claim for the "universality" of the principle, but confined its application to the Europe of the *ancien régime*, during which time politics among sovereign rulers was held to be entirely free from ideological determinants. Furthermore, while he treated balance of power policies as "natural" and largely instinctive, he admitted nevertheless that the practice of balancing was the result of reasoned decisions based on the principle of *raison d'état*. Political action is the result of the desire for "power after power," greed and covetousness. Aggrandizement is the policy motive which holds the key to the understanding of international relations. And *raison d'état*

> rules in all situations in which one feels oneself strong enough to follow with impunity the policies suggested by it. It inspires the same thoughts in Vienna and in Berlin. Young rulers and future ministers are taught about it. I read in the *Institutions politiques* of Bielfeld: "In whatever situation a state may find itself, the fundamental principle of *raison d'état* remains unchanged. This principle, accepted by all ancient and modern nations, is that the welfare of the people should always be the supreme law." "The great powers," wrote an Austrian diplomat in 1791, "must only conduct themselves in accordance with *raison d'état*. . . . Interest must win all varieties of resentment, however just they may be."

Something that can be taught to young rulers clearly is not instinctive. Yet Sorel holds that the very excesses of unrestrained and aggressive *raison d'état* doctrines result in their antithesis: moderation, willingness to forego expansion when the prize is small, and a willingness to abide by treaties if no undue sacrifice seems implied. Sorel sums up these restraints in the term "understood interest" (*intérêt bien entendu*), and maintains that if practiced they result in a balance of power:

> The converging of ambitions is the limit to aggrandizement. Since there are no more unclaimed territories in Europe, one state can only enrich itself at the expense of its neighbors. But all the powers agreed in not permitting a single one among them to rise above the others. He who pretends to the role of the lion must see his rivals ally themselves against him. Thus there arises among the great states a sort of society, through common concern: they want to preserve what they possess, gain in proportion to their commitment and forbid each of the associated states to lay down the law to the others.[31]

[31] A. Sorel, *L'Europe et la Révolution française*, Paris, 1908, I, pp. 19-20, 30-35.

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Balance of power thus comes to mean the instinctive antithesis to the reasoned thesis of *raison d'état*. Unconscious moderation, temporarily, restrains deliberate greed. A general dialectic of power relationships is thus created in which balances of power play a definite part. However, no balance is permanent and is subject to change at a moment's notice. It guarantees neither peace nor law; in fact, it implies war and its own destruction whenever a former counterweight state acquires sufficient power to challenge the very balance which it was called upon to maintain.

(8) *Balance as a "System" and "Guide" to policy-making.* In the formulation of the balance of power as a universal law of history there was an element of instinctive, unconscious, and unplanned behavior which would defy any analysis in terms of conscious human motivations. Statesmen were represented as acting in accordance with the prescriptions of the balance of power as if they were the unconscious pawns of some invisible hand, to borrow a phrase from Adam Smith. In the formulation of the balance of power as a system of political organization and guide to policy-making, emphasis is firmly thrown on conscious and deliberate behavior and decision-making.

What is the balance of power as a system and guide? A few short definitions might suggest tentative answers. Thus, Professor Fay says: "It means such a 'just equilibrium' in power among the members of the family of nations as will prevent any of them from becoming sufficiently strong to enforce its will upon the others."[32] Or, again, in the words of Professor Gooch, the balance of power is

> the determination, partly conscious and partly instinctive, to resist by diplomacy or arms the growth of any European state at once so formidable and so actually or so potentially hostile as to threaten our liberties, the security of our shores, the safety of our commerce, or the integrity of our foreign possessions.[33]

Needless to add, this is a particularly British understanding of the balance of power, underlining once more the difficulty—

[32] S. B. Fay, *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, article on the balance of power, I, pp. 395-99.

[33] G. P. Gooch. "European Diplomacy Before the War in the Light of the Archives," *International Affairs*, XVIII (1939), p. 78.

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if not the impossibility—of stating the theory in such terms that all governments could subscribe to it at any one time. Both definitions, however, are in very close agreement with some of the classical statements of the nature of the balance of power, understood as a guide to statesmen on how to prevent any other state from acquiring enough power to threaten their state in any way. Thus Fénelon, a moralist with considerable experience in policy-making, said:

> To hinder one's neighbor from becoming too strong is not to do harm; it is to guarantee one's self and one's neighbor from subjection; in a word it is to work for liberty, tranquility, and public safety. Because the aggrandizement of one nation beyond a certain limit changes the general system of all nations connected with it . . . the excessive aggrandizement of one may mean the ruin and subjection of all the other neighbors. . . . This attention to the maintenance of a kind of equality and equilibrium between neighboring states is what assures peace for all.[34]

Leagues to preserve the balance of power are then advocated by the learned bishop, but he is careful to specify that they may not be used for offensive purposes. Moreover, the balancing process was to assure that no state was eliminated from the map of Europe, no matter how much it might have to be "limited" to assure the security of its neighbors. No less a thinker than David Hume also understood the balance in this sense. He postulated, first, the existence of a multi-state system, dominated by competition and hostility among the members. Statesmen ever since Thucydides, said Hume, have made good policy when they checked in due time, through alliances and coalition wars, the growth of a state potentially able to absorb them all, and made bad policy when they ignored this guiding principle.[35] It is interesting to note in passing that Hume approved of the balance of power as a guide to "good" policy-making while opposing the mercantilist balance of trade theory, whereas most of the other opponents of mercantilism in his age—e.g., the elder Mirabeau—attacked the balance of power as well.[36] This, in essence, is the

[34] Fay, *op.cit.*, p. 396. Stieglitz is to be counted among those in agreement with the guide-and-system theory.

[35] D. Hume, "On the Balance of Power," *Essays Moral, Political and Literary*, London, 1889, I, pp. 352-53.

[36] For a study of the relationship between balance of trade and balance of power theories, cf. K. Pribram, "Die Idee des Gleichgewichts in der älteren nationalökono-

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formulation given by the majority of publicists to the theory of the balance of power, considered only as a conscious guide to policy-making. It is stated succinctly and incisively by Dupuis:

> The simple instinct of prudence would suffice to suggest the idea of the balance of power; the meditations of statesmen and the lessons of experience have transformed the instinct into a rule of conduct and raised the idea to the dignity of a principle. And in the role of political principle, the balance of power does not only have the advantage of reminding councils of the prudence confirmed by the teachings of the past; it has the merit of opening, during periods of crisis, a field for negotiation and if it cannot dictate the solutions of the conflict, it can prepare the setting for an alliance.[37]

The guide, therefore, merely tells statesmen to prevent the growth of any state which, merely because of its power, is potentially able to absorb or limit their own states. There is a good deal of diplomatic evidence to support this contention, in that some leaders have actually made their decision to go to war on just these grounds. The policy of William III in going to war against France in 1701 is a case in point, as shown by the King's speech to Parliament. And the text of the treaty of peace with Spain, of July 18, 1713, gives expression to the same principle once more.[38] In the anonymous *Free Britain*, attributed to none other than Sir Robert Walpole himself, it is stated that

> Our liberty and our welfare depend on the greatest possible division and on a just balance of power among the princes of Europe: the British nation can and must maintain, and if need be, enclose the powers within the limits in which they find themselves today. She must make alliances with the princes who, for their own preservation, are interested in preventing the aggrandizement of others intending the eventual attack upon Great Britain.[39]

So much for the guide. How does the balance of power then become a system? It stands to reason that if all the states of Europe (or the world) were to base their policies on the prescription of the balance of power, a "system" would come about in the sense that the least movement toward hegemony by one

mischen Theorie," *Zeitschrift für Volkswirtschaft, Sozialpolitik und Verwaltung*, XVII (1908), pp. 1-28; see also Felix Gilbert, "The 'New Diplomacy' of the Eighteenth Century," *World Politics*, IV (October 1951), pp. 1-38.

[37] C. Dupuis, *Le principe d'équilibre et le concert européen*, Paris, 1909, pp. 104-5.

[38] The text of the speech and of the treaty are cited in Nys, *op.cit.*, pp. 47-49.

[39] *Ibid.*, pp. 55-56.

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would immediately result in the coalition of the other states into an opposing alliance. The ever-present readiness to do just that and the constant vigilance declared necessary to prevent any one state's hegemony would in themselves produce this system of the balance of power. It is at this point that the theory grows more fanciful. The earlier doctrines, based on the guide-and-system idea, contented themselves with the so-called simple balance. The analogy is that of a pair of scales, and the supposition was that there would be only two major states, with their satellites, in the "system." The idea of a strict physical equilibrium—or slight hegemony—would then apply. Later doctrines, however, introduced the notion of the complex balance, on the analogy of the chandelier. More than two states, plus satellites, were postulated, and the necessity for preserving the freedom of all from the lust for dominance by any one was thought to involve the setting into motion of various weights and counterweights on all sides of the chandelier. It is this system which is closely related to the idea of the "balancer," introduced into the theory by British writers during the seventeenth century and a commonplace in the eighteenth. It implied, of course, the existence of powers sufficiently unconcerned by the merits of whatever the issue of the crisis was to be willing to "add their weight" to whichever side was the weaker, and thus prevent the possible victory—and implied hegemony—of the stronger. The balance of power considered as a guide was the reasoning process at the base of the system.[40]

Meanings and the Intentions of Users

The foregoing analysis of verbal applications of the term "balance of power" has resulted in the demonstration of eight more or less distinct meanings and connotations which the term may carry. Of more significance to the application of balance of power terminology in the discussion of international affairs, however, is the use to which these meanings may be put. For

[40] E. de Vattel, *Le droit des gens ou principes de la loi naturelle*, III, pt. 3, pars. 28, 33, 42, 43. 44, 47, 48, 49, 50; Sir R. Phillimore, *Commentaries upon International Law*, London, 1871, I, pp. 468-511. Examples of this usage are found most commonly in the writings of statesmen. They will be cited below.

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just as the emphasis on collective security and Wilsonian liberalism in international relations tends to exclude discussion of the balance of power—either as irrelevant or else as undesirable—for essentially ideological reasons, so can the application of the term by its proponents vary with their ideological, theoretical, and practical preoccupations. An attempt will therefore be made to correlate the application of various usages of the term with the intentions of its users, at least insofar as these intentions may be ascertained from the context of the writings and statements examined. Four areas of intention can thus be distinguished: a purely descriptive intent; a conscious or unconscious propagandistic intent; an intention of using the term as an analytical concept in the development of a theory of international relations; and an intention of using the term as a guide to foreign policy-making.

BALANCE OF POWER AS DESCRIPTION

Forswearing any theoretical or analytical purpose, writers commonly have recourse to the term "balance of power" in discussing international affairs. Current references to the balance of power by journalists and radio commentators most frequently fall into this category. And in most instances the meaning to be conveyed to the audience merely implies "distribution" of power, rather than "balance" in anything like the literal sense. The citations from Bolingbroke, the reference by C. L. Sulzberger, and the statement of Henry Wallace quoted above all meet these criteria. By using the term "balance of power" these writers were merely describing a particular distribution of power. Their intentions then did not carry them into any more ambitious realm.

On other occasions, however, the descriptive use of the term implies more than a mere distribution of power. It may then come to mean "equilibrium" or even "hegemony" or "preponderance" of power, still without implying more than a descriptive intent. It is quite possible that the political motivations of the particular user may make their entrance at this point. Thus Lisola, writing in the seventeenth century, saw in the balance of power the equilibrium between Habsburg and

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Bourbon interests. But he used his description to counsel war on France in order to maintain that very equilibrium. Austrian writers again invoked the balance of power principle during the wars of the Polish and Austrian Succession in order to secure allies against France and Prussia, represented as seeking hegemony. During the preceding century, French writers had used the equilibrium connotation of the term to demand war on Austria. And it might be pointed out parenthetically that during the Seven Years' War British officials frowned on the use of balance of power terms to justify British aid to Prussia, since it was Frederick II who had "disturbed the balance" with his attack on Austria.[41] In all these writings and statements the term "balance of power" is used and abused as a descriptive phrase, connoting the existence or non-existence of equilibrium and the actual or threatened hegemony of some state or alliance. The same easy transition in meaning from "distribution" to "equilibrium" and finally to "hegemony" can sometimes be detected in contemporary references to the balance of power. These usages are rarely kept in their separate compartments. And, when the users' intentions go beyond that of mere description, clarity of thought and purpose may be seriously jeopardized.

BALANCE OF POWER AS PROPAGANDA AND "IDEOLOGY"

A precise understanding of the verbal meaning of the term "balance of power" becomes especially important when it is used as a propagandistic slogan or as an ideological phrase, in the Mannheimian sense. The meanings of "balance" as being identical with either "peace" or "war" fall into this category. Obviously, while it might be correct to speak of a state of balance or imbalance *implying* or *engendering* either war or peace, the balance as such cannot logically be equated with conditions which might arise as a consequence of the balance, i.e., war or peace. In the cases in which the authors employed it to mean "peace" or "war," "balance of power" then became no more than a convenient catchword to focus individual aspirations into a generally acceptable mold; and there can be no

[41] For examples, see Kaeber, *op.cit.*, pp. 44-47.

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doubt that at certain times the concept of balance was an extremely popular one, whether it was used for policy-making or not. If used in a patently forced manner, the term becomes indistinguishable from plain propaganda. Of this particular usage some striking examples may be cited.

Thus, the anonymous author of the *Relative State of Great Britain in 1813* saw fit to make the phrase cover the total complex of his social, economic, moral, and political predilections:

> The French revolution being founded in the principle of depraving and reversing the human heart and feeling (as the American Republic is built upon frigid indifference and calculation of gain), it is not difficult to perceive how everything which tended to preserve the bond of sacredness of national contracts, and the reciprocity of benefits and engagements—how history, and memory itself, became objects of hatred and jealousy, and organized assault and hostility—and how the balance of power, in particular, opposed and threatened the views of France, which were to ruin and destroy everything, and the views of America to make profit and percentage upon the ruin and destruction of everything. Nor is it easy to pronounce a juster or more happy panegyric upon that system, than what evidently and immediately results from the forced and unnatural coalition of such powers as these (the very worst extremes of democracy and despotism), and the common interest their leaders conceive themselves to have discovered in extinguishing it.

The depraved ideology of France and the United States seemed here to be identified with the upsetting of the balance of power. And the re-establishment of the balance would be the means to end this deplorable state of morality:

> For my part, I shall never blush to confess, that I am able to form no conception of any security in any peace that shall have no guarantees—any effectual guarantee, without a distribution and partition of force, adjusted by political alliance and combination—of any defense or protection for that distribution without a permanent and recognized system of public law, and a real or reputed balance of power amongst the several states it embraces.[42]

This treatment, then, identifies the balance of power with the kind of world conditions, in their totality, which the author desires. The fact that domestic, moral, and ideological factors are haphazardly mixed up with considerations of pure power seems not to have made any difference.

[42] Anon., *Considerations on the Relative State of Great Britain in 1813*, London, 1813, pp. 3-4.

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This invocation of the balance of power was no more propagandistic, however, than the use made of it by Friedrich Wilhelm II in the Declaration of Pillnitz, June 25, 1792, which constituted the manifesto of the allied monarchs attacking France:

> There was no power interested in maintaining the European balance which could be indifferent when the Kingdom of France, which formed such a considerable weight in that great balance, was delivered for long periods of time to internal agitation and to the horrors of disorder and anarchy, which, so to speak, have nullified its political existence.[43]

But the era of the Revolution and the Empire by no means provided the only examples of this type of application. It enjoyed a renaissance during World War I. Then F. J. Schmidt, for instance, asserted that "Germany has the historical call to realize the idea of the balance of power in all its territorial and maritime consequences."[44] And as detached a scholar as Friedrich Meinecke argued that the peace treaty should establish a "new balance of power" instead of depriving Germany of all her conquests.[45] Nor was the invocation of the balance by Louis XIV much different when he used it to justify the accession of his grandson to the throne of Spain, nor Fleury's use of it when he called upon its absolving force to explain France's attack on the Pragmatic Sanction in 1740.[46]

It is apparent that in all these cases the balance of power was invoked in such a way as to serve as the justification for policies not *ipso facto* related to balancing anything. In some instances it was used to cloak ideological conflicts, in others to sanctify the search for hegemony over Europe, and in still others to "justify" the continued strength and size of a defeated state. The significance of this invocation, then, lies not in any theoretical belief, but in the fact that the users of the term felt so convinced of its

[43] Cited in Stieglitz, *op.cit.*, I, p. 51. See also the facile use of the doctrine made by Bonald in (1) justifying Napoleonic expansion and (2) asking for a lenient peace in 1815 (Moulinié, *De Bonald*, Paris, 1915, pp. 390-97).

[44] F. J. Schmidt, in *Preussische Jahrbücher*, CLVIII (1914), pp. 1-15; also H. Oncken, *Das alte und das neue Mitteleuropa*, Gotha, 1917, passim.

[45] F. Meinecke, *Probleme des Weltkriegs*, Munich, 1917, p. 134. In his important *Die Idee der Staatsräson in der neueren Geschichte*, in which he claims to be analyzing the doctrine and philosophical meaning of the *raison d'état* idea completely dispassionately, the same argument shows up rather prominently in the last chapter, dressed up in terms of historical necessity.

[46] Jacob, *op.cit.*, pp. 349, 351, 354-55.

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popularity as to make its conversion into a symbol of proper policy propagandistically profitable.

Propaganda assumes the dishonest use of facts and the distortion of concepts devised on intellectually sincere grounds. It implies conscious and deliberate falsification.[47] Ideology, as defined by Mannheim, however, postulates belief in a set of symbols which, even though they may be "false" objectively, still characterize the total myth system of social groups and are essential to the spiritual cohesion of a ruling group which would lose its sense of control if it were conscious of the "real" state of affairs. It is therefore possible to raise the hypothesis that the balance of power may have served such "ideological" purposes. It may have been used to explain policies in terms of natural laws, in terms of moral rightness, or in terms of historical necessity if the symbol chosen to "put it over" was a sufficiently widely accepted one; indeed, if it was a symbol—even a metaphorical one—which the ruling groups themselves tended to accept. In this sense, the term "balance of power" would not serve a strictly propagandistic purpose, since the element of falsification yields to the element of self-deception.[48]

In a remarkable eighteenth-century essay the whole concept of the balance of power was criticized in these very terms. In his *Die Chimäre des Gleichgewichts von Europa*, Justi concluded that the balance of power theory is nothing but the ideological justification adopted by statesmen eager to hide their real motives, motives usually described by the term "aggression." As he put it:

> We regard the dependence of a free state upon another and more powerful state, the latter trying to prevent the former from adopting

[47] My conception of propaganda may be expressed in Leonard W. Doob's definition: "Intentional propaganda is a systematic attempt by an interested individual (or individuals) to control the attitudes of groups of individuals through the use of suggestion and, consequently, to control their actions" (*Propaganda*, New York, 1935, p. 89). It is clear that this postulation does not assume that the propagandist himself accepts the material or shares the attitudes he attempts to disseminate. I cannot accept the definition of propaganda offered by Doob in *Public Opinion and Propaganda* (New York, 1948, p. 240), since it seems almost indistinguishable from the more general concept of ideology.

[48] For a masterful analysis of this aspect of the balance of power, see Vagts, *op.cit.*, pp. 88-89, 100ff. I have explored the ideological significance of the concept with respect to European diplomacy in the 1830's in my doctoral dissertation, *Belgium and the Balance of Power*, Columbia University Library.

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> the proper measures for its happiness, as the greatest misfortune of a people, which should be avoided through the system of the balance of power. Yet such a coarse idea of universal monarchy which aims at reducing all states to provinces of its own state can scarcely ever be realized; however, the means proposed to avoid it are far more to be feared than the evil itself. If a balance of power were to exist in actuality then no slavery would be as hard, since each state would oppose every other state. Upon each new domestic arrangement, each internal improvement, the other states would be compelled to protest and interfere in order to prevent the first state from growing too powerful because of its domestic perfection. And the mutual dependence of such states would be far worse slavery than dependence upon one powerful neighbor. One state would object to one feature and the second to another feature of the internal improvement, and each state would concern itself more with the domestic business of its neighbors than with its own perfection.

All this, Justi argues, means that the whole concept is impossible.[49] And again, he urges what he considers the real *raison d'être* of the usage, thus, incidentally, coming perilously close to characterizing the balance of power as a purely propagandistic device:

> When a state which has grown more powerful internally is attacked . . . in order to weaken it, such action is motivated least of all by the balance of power. This would be a war which is waged by the several states against the strong state for specific interests, and the rules of the balance of power will only be camouflage under which these interests are hidden. . . . States, like private persons, are guided by nothing but their private interests, real or imaginary, and they are far from being guided by a chimerical balance of power. Name one state which has participated in a war contrary to its interests or without a specific interest, only to maintain the balance of power.[50]

The distinction between the propagandistic and ideological uses is thus a tenuous one. The "camouflage" is ideological only if the actors on the international stage are themselves convinced, to some extent, of the identity of "private interest" with a general need for balancing power *qua* power.

[49] J. H. G. von Justi, *Die Chimäre des Gleichgewichts von Europa*, Altona, 1758, p. 60.

[50] *Ibid.*, p. 65. Albert Sorel's estimate of the invocation of balancing terminology by statesmen is a similar one. Since he denies that balancing policies are deliberately chosen by diplomats and since he urges that only the search for unilateral hegemony motivates policy, he argues in fact that the use of the term by statesmen implies a disguised hankering for superiority and no more (*op.cit.*, p. 34).

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BALANCE OF POWER AS ANALYTICAL CONCEPT

At the opposite pole of the propaganda-oriented application of the term "balance of power" lies the user's intention to employ the term as a tool of analysis. It is in this area of intentions that the term rose to the status of a theory of international relations during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, no less than it has in our own era. It is also true, however, that in this area as well as in the other fields of intentions analyzed so far not one but several of the verbal meanings of the term find application. Even as a tool of scholarly analysis the term has been used to mean "power politics," "equilibrium," "hegemony" and, finally, a "universal law" of state conduct.

"The basic principle of the balance of power," wrote Réal de Curban, "is incontestable: the power of one ruler, in the last analysis, is nothing but the ruin and diminution of that of his neighbors, and his power is nothing but the weakness of the others."[51] And in a Hobbesian state of nature which was presupposed to exist among sovereign states no other conclusion seemed possible. This reasoning has led numerous writers to equate the balance of power with power politics or *Realpolitik* generally. The struggle for self-preservation in the state of nature implies the formation of alliances and mutually antagonistic blocs which in turn make negotiations in "good faith" a contradiction in terms. Power politics are the only discernible pattern in which balancing is an inherent process. As such, it is not separate from but identical with competitive power struggles. Consequently, in dispassionate analyses of international affairs the "balance" of power carries no significance other than that usually associated with "power politics," unrefined by any conception of equilibrium or deliberate balancing measures.[52]

Furthermore, the concept of evenly balanced power, or "equilibrium," finds frequent application as a tool of analysis. In the preceding discussion the equilibrium concept found application merely as a descriptive phrase implying no generalized

[51] Réal de Curban, *op.cit.*, VI, p. 442.

[52] See, e.g., H. N. Brailsford and G. Lowes Dickinson, as quoted in Georg Schwarzenberger, *Power Politics*, London, 1940, p. 123, and also the author's own comments, which also tend to equate power politics with power balance.

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behavior pattern in international relations. In the present context the reverse is true. Lasswell, in speaking of the "balancing process," for instance, assumes that under conditions of expected future violence—domestic as well as international—any increase in the coercion potential of one power unit will lead to a compensatory increase in the competing unit or units. Further increases on the part of one side will always bring corresponding increases on the part of its competitors, so that in effect a rough equality of power potential will always prevail, a factor which may make for either open conflict or induce fear of refraining from hostilities, depending on circumstances, the nature of the elites in question, and the accuracy of intelligence reports concerning the degree of "balancing." The analytical application of the equilibrium-meaning of the balance of power, in short, generalizes the basic assumption of the absence of international consensus and the consequent inherent presence of conflict into a pattern of balancing.

Carrying the equilibrium-meaning one step further results in the application of the balance of power concept as implying the search for hegemony. This application again finds its counterpart in the intentions of detached analysts striving for a generalized understanding of phenomena rather than for description. Spykman, as demonstrated above, clearly sets forth the assumptions of this approach. His argument is that the search for power by sovereign states is an end in itself, since conflict—actual or potential—is the only consistent pattern in relations between state units. While the search for power originally implied the desire for self-preservation, a generalized desire for power-seeking over a long period of time converts this process into an end in itself. On this level, the discussion of the balance of power is identical with power politics generally. As in the case of Lasswell's balancing process, however, the generalized process of competitive power-seeking must result in equilibrium if war is avoided—temporarily. But statesmen, as indicated above, seek a margin of safety in superiority of power and not in equality of power. Hence the search for equilibrium in effect is the search for hegemony, and the balance of power as an analytical concept becomes another term for the simultaneous search for preponder-

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ance of power by all the sovereign participants. No wonder Spykman exclaims that

> He who plays the balance of power can have no permanent friends. His devotion can be to no specific state but only to balanced power. The ally of today is the enemy of tomorrow. One of the charms of power politics is that it offers no opportunity to grow weary of one's friends. England's reputation as *perfide Albion* is the inevitable result of her preoccupation with the balance of power.[53]

In this refined analysis, the balance of power comes to be considered as a special case—either in its equilibrium or its hegemony connotation—in the general pattern of power politics, though Spykman in the passage just cited again tends to use the two terms interchangeably.

The supreme attempt to use the balance of power as an analytical concept arises in the case of those writers who make the balance the essence of a theory of international relations. It is here that the balance attains the quality of a "law of history," as indeed Rousseau and Donnadieu implied by their very choice of words, and many contemporary writers by their emphasis on the "naturalness" of state behavior in accordance with the dictates of balanced power. The universal law connotation of the balance of power presupposes state conduct in no way different from the assumptions of Spykman and Lasswell. But Professors Morgenthau and Schuman, for instance, in giving the balance of power this extended meaning, go beyond the characterization of equilibrium and hegemony. They develop the thesis that it is inherent in the nature of a multi-state system based on sovereignty to engage in mutually hostile policies, for whatever motives. In this process the search for balanced power, the need to form blocs and counterblocs to prevent the feared attainment of hegemony by one or the other of the participants in the conflict is a natural, if not instinctive, choice of policy. A group of revisionist states always lines up against a group of states devoted to the maintenance of the status quo in such a way that approximate balance results. So general is this pattern that it attains the quality of a historical law. And the characteristic feature of this law is that it does not necessarily

[53] Spykman, *op.cit.*, pp. 1-21, 103-4.

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assume a conscious intention on the part of statesmen to "balance power with power" in a sense which would imply the official acceptance of a balance of power theory by governments. Statesmen, to be sure, may be consciously motivated by balancing notions. But, if they are not, the policies which they would most logically adopt would be those consistent with the balance of power. As Professor Morgenthau indicates, if they fail to do so, they do not make "logical" policy and thereby violate historically proven and generalized modes of conduct. The distinctive feature about the balance of power applied as a tool of analysis, then, is its possible separation from the motivations of governments.

BALANCE OF POWER AS PRESCRIPTION

While the analytical application of the term does not imply conscious acceptance of balancing rules by governments, there is a large body of thought—historical and contemporary—which does insist that the balance of power is—or should be—a guiding principle for decision-making on the part of governments. It is this application of the term which makes use of the meaning defined above as "guide-and-system." Once more international relations are pictured, in one version, as being in the Hobbesian state of nature, so that survival dictates the formation of alliances among those states committed to "preserving the balance" against the onslaught of the state (s) allegedly seeking world or regional domination or, as the eighteenth-century writers put it, "universal monarchy." In this sense, the balance is a conscious guide dictating the rules of survival. In another sense, however, the world (or Europe, in the earlier writing) is represented as a "system" of states tied together by mutual interdependence, common institutions, and a common system of law (the law of nations), and the search for hegemony of a single member of this "system" was then represented as an attack upon the whole organic unit.[54] The system was based on the continued

[54] The extreme example of this body of thought is represented by Wolff with his concept of the *civitas maxima* and the role of the balance of power in preventing its destruction (*Ius Gentium Methoda Scientifica Pertractantum*, pars. 642-43, 646, 651, *Classics of International Law*, no. 13, 1934). Also Pufendorf, *Ius Naturae et Gentium*. Book VIII, ch. 6, *ibid.*, no. 17, 1934.

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independence of all members and their common will to resist the search for hegemony by any one of their number. The balance of power was inherent in the very system itself and also acted as a body of rules dictating the proper policies for preventing the attainment of hegemony, i.e., it acted as a "guide."

That Metternich subscribed in principle and in considerable detail to the theory of the balance of power as a guide to foreign policy-making is beyond any doubt. Consistent with his overall political philosophy of the value of historically sanctioned social and political traditions, of the need for preserving what the historical process had created and for protecting it against the fanaticism and stupidity of misguided men, i.e., the liberals, Metternich considered the balance of power as another of these time-hallowed doctrines, and as an international institution vital to the preservation of the total institutional status quo which he so cherished. As he wrote:

> Politics is the science of the life of the state, on its highest level. Since isolated states no longer exist . . . it is the society of states, this important condition of the contemporary world, which has to be watched carefully. Thus each state, in addition to its particular interests, has certain common interests, either with the totality of the other states or with certain groups among them. The great axioms of political science derive from the understanding of real political interests, of all states; the guarantee for their existence rests in these general interests, whereas particular interests . . . only possess a relative and secondary value. History teaches that whenever the particular interests of one state are in contradiction with the general interest and whenever the latter is neglected or misunderstood, this condition . . . is to be regarded as exceptional and pathological. . . . The modern world is characterized, in distinction to the old world, by a tendency of states to approach one another and to enter into the bonds of society in some manner; so that the resulting bond rests on the same foundations as the great society which developed in the shadow of Christianity. This foundation consists of the command of the Book of Books: "Do not do unto others what you would not have others do unto you." Applying this basic rule of all human associations to the state, the result is reciprocity, politically speaking, and its effect is. . . : mutual respect and honest conduct. In the ancient world, politics sought pure isolation and practiced absolute egoism, without any control save common sense. . . . Modern history, however, shows us the application of the principle of solidarity and the balance of power offers us the drama of the unified efforts of several states in

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> restraining the hegemony of a single state and limiting the expansion of its influence, and thus forcing it to return to public law.[55]

This formulation of international relations in general as necessary and close rapport between the states of Europe, which he regarded in the then customary manner as so many atoms in a universe held together by Christian moral rules and the dictates of international law, and of the balance of power as the *ad hoc* regulating mechanism of this system, is in almost all respects identical with the formulation of Ancillon, of Castlereagh, of Brougham, and of Gentz. Thus Ancillon, Prussian court chaplain in the 1820's, tutor to Frederick William IV, and State Secretary for Foreign Affairs from 1832 until 1835, argued:

> All forces are similar to the nature of expanding bodies; thus, in the society of large states in which law does not enjoy an external guarantee, we take as our point of departure the possible or even probable misuse of force. What will be the result? Mutual distrust, fear and restlessness, always recurring and always effective. Each state can have no other maxims in its external relations than these: whoever can do us damage through an excessive balance of power in his favor, or through his geographical position, is our natural enemy, but whoever in view of his position and forces is able to harm our enemy, is our natural friend. These simple maxims which the need for self-preservation has given to man, are and have been at all times the anchors on which all of politics rests.[56]

Nor was Castlereagh's understanding of the balance of power much different, even though he indicated that "my real and only object was to create a permanent counterpoise to the power of France in peace as well as in war." The Concert of Europe through its regular conferences was merely to be the consultative mechanism whereby the *ad hoc* balance could be maintained through timely negotiations.[57] However, the likelihood of the guide-and-system version of the balance implying different "rules" for different states is here betrayed.

[55] Metternich, *Aus Metternichs Nachgelassenen Papieren*, Vienna, 1882, I, pp. 32ff., a section entitled, "Maxims on Which the Actions of My Political Career Have Been Based."

[56] Paul Haake, *J. P. F. Ancillon and Kronprinz Friedrich Wilhelm IV. von Preussen*, Munich, 1920, p. 40. Of Ancillon's own works, see his *Ueber den Geist der Staatsverfassungen und dessen Einfluss auf die Gesetzgebung*, Berlin, 1825, pp. 16-19, 313-14, 317-31, and *Tableau des révolutions du système de l'Europe*, Paris, 1806, IV, pp. 5-19.

[57] Sir Charles Webster, *British Diplomacy, 1813-1815*, London, 1921, pp. 62, 218; and Castlereagh's memorandum of October 30, 1814, for Alexander I, cited in Angeberg, *Les traités de Vienne*, Paris, 1864, pp. 399-401.

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Gentz's theory of the balance of power was stated in his *Fragmente aus der neusten Geschichte des politischen Gleichgewichts in Europa* (1806), the purpose of which was to give the Austrian and British governments an excuse for unleashing a new war on Napoleon without having been attacked first. Gentz, it might be added, was in the pay of the British cabinet to produce writings of this type. He rejected the arguments that an exact equilibrium is impossible and that power cannot be measured as irrelevant to the system, since all the system requires is eternal vigilance that no state acquires enough power to overawe all of Europe.[58] Also, he thought that the certainty of a strong counterforce being mustered against the hegemony-seeker was a sufficient deterrent and that actual war would usually be unnecessary. And

> Only when one or the other state, with open violence, invented pretexts, or artificially concocted legal titles, undertakes enterprises which, directly or in their inevitable consequences, lead to the enslavement of its weaker neighbors, or to the constant endangering, gradual weakening and eventual demise of its stronger neighbors, only then there will come about a breach of the balance, according to the sound conceptions of the collective interest of a system of states; only then will the several states combine in order to prevent the hegemony of a single state, through a timely contrived counterweight.[59]

Yet Gentz opposed policies of partition and compensation as violating the true conservative character of the theory. Moreover, there could be no such thing as indifference to a given issue, since under the power rules all issues had to be of equal interest to all states in the system.[60] His comments on the right to intervene in the domestic affairs of other states are of the highest interest. Gentz urged that ideological distastes for internal changes elsewhere did not in themselves constitute a ground for balance of power intervention and war. But as soon as such changes had the necessary consequence of upsetting the balance of power, i.e., as soon as the new ideology seemed to suggest the search for hegemony, then the right to intervene existed, as in 1793.[61]

The case of Lord Brougham is a fascinating one for the study

[58] Gentz, *Fragmente aus der neutsten Geschichte des politischen Gleichgewichts in Europa*, St. Petersburg, 1806, pp. 1-8.
[59] *Ibid.*, pp. 10-14. [60] *Ibid.*, ch. II. [61] *Ibid.*, ch. IV.

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of the theory of the balance of power. In his essay on "The Balance of Power," written in 1803, he urged that the balance was the only tenable theory of international relations. He defined it in the same terms as Gentz and Ancillon and added:

> Had it not been for that wholesome jealousy of rival neighbors, which modern politicians have learned to cherish, how many conquests and changes of dominion would have taken place, instead of wars, in which some lives were lost, not perhaps the most valuable in the community, and some superfluous millions were squandered! How many fair portions of the globe might have been deluged in blood, instead of some hundreds of sailors fighting harmlessly on the barren plains of the ocean, and some thousands of soldiers carrying on a scientific and regular and quiet system of warfare in countries set apart for the purpose, and resorted to as the arena where the disputes of nations might be determined.

The old argument of the tacit federation of Europe, the common system of law and morals, and the need for the regulating mechanism of the balance to keep one of the "federated" states from absorbing the others is restated in full.[62] The principle, as well as the detailed application of the theory in its guide-and-system form, were stated by the young Brougham in the classical manner, and with unsurpassed and brief lucidity:

> It is not then in the mere plan for forming offensive or defensive alliances; or in the principles of attacking a neighbor in order to weaken his power, before he has betrayed hostile views; or in the policy of defending a rival, in order to stay, in proper time, the progress of a common enemy; it is not in these simple maxims that the modern system consists. These are indeed the elements, the great and leading parts of the theory; they are the maxims dictated by the plainest and coarsest views of political expediency: but they do not form the whole system; nor does the knowledge of them . . . comprehend an acquaintance with the profounder and more subtile parts of modern policy. The grand and distinguishing feature of the balancing theory, is the systematic form to which it reduces those plain and obvious principles of national conduct; the perpetual attention to foreign affairs which it inculcates; the constant watchfulness which it prescribes over every movement in all parts of the system; the subjection in which it tends to place all national passions and antipathies to the views of remote expediency; the unceasing care which it dictates of national concerns most remotely situated, and apparently unconnected with ourselves; the general union, which it has effected, of all the European powers in one connecting system—obeying certain laws and actuated, for the most part, by a common principle; in fine, as a consequence of the

[62] Brougham, *Works*, London, 1872, VIII, pp. 4-12.

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> whole, the right of mutual inspection, now universally recognized among civilized states, in the appointment of public envoys and residents [sic]. This is the balancing theory.[63]

Intervention in domestic developments of other states, of course, is legal if the balance of power is really and truly threatened by these changes. The superiority of the balance to all ideological considerations, so plainly stated here, is especially striking. This principle he repeated in his "General Principles of Foreign Policy" (1843) in most emphatic terms:

> But the mere circumstance of our preferring a democratic to an aristocratic or a monarchical to a republican scheme of government, can never afford any good ground for uniting with others who have the same preference, against a community or a league of states, whose views of national polity are of a contrary description.[64]

Hence the Holy Alliance—or the Western bloc against it after 1832—was not consistent with the rules of the balance. Not only is ideological intervention condemned, but Brougham urged that

> it is the bounden duty of all rulers to discourage sentiments in their subjects leading to national enmities; and when a popular cry arises against any foreign people, a general clamor for war, there is no more sacred duty on the part of the government than to resist such a clamor and keep the peace in spite of it.[65]

In short, any manifestations of public opinion had to be rigorously excluded from policy-making under balancing rules, a sentiment heard more and more frequently in our present epoch.

Whether the balance of power is regarded merely as a set of rules to be applied to the preservation of the state or whether it is expanded into the defensive mechanism of some "system"—and by analogy the United Nations system might today be considered the successor to the European system postulated by the earlier writers—the rules laid down by Gentz and Brougham remain the same. The statesman who is anxious to preserve his state must have recourse to balancing principles in averting the hegemony of his rival. The perusal of the contemporary literature on this subject confirms this conclusion. George F. Kennan's *American Diplomacy* is merely the latest and best-known ex-

[63] *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13, 33-38.
[64] *Ibid.*, pp. 70-71, 77, 79-80, 80-83.
[65] *Ibid.*, pp. 91-93, 100-2.

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ample of the continuing importance ascribed to balancing rules in international relations. And the fact that the examples cited concerned statesmen conscious of the balance as a motivating force underlines the possible importance of the concept as prescription.

Intentions and Their Significance to a Theory of International Relations

The breakdown of the "balance of power" phrase into a series of eight distinct verbal meanings has now been categorized into four possible applications which these meanings have found in political literature, and perhaps in diplomacy as well. It is not to be inferred that in these classifications there is one which alone is of general value and applicability to the analysis of international relations. This problem is inherent in the inevitably somewhat arbitrary basis of distinction adopted in the foregoing analysis. It is not claimed, of course, that the term "balance of power," in any of its eight possible connotations, is used as propaganda or description in the intentions of any one writer to the exclusion of other possible intended applications. The four categories here established, in short, cannot be regarded as mutually exclusive even in the intentions of the same writer, analyst, commentator, or statesman.[66] A basic barrier in communication is created by this apparently facile interchangeability of meanings and intentions. A theoretical analysis, therefore, cannot proceed on the basis of identifying one writer with one meaning or one category of intentions. Each meaning and intention must be considered separately in terms of the immediate context, even though meanings and intentions may change as the context changes, either in compliance with the user's overall scheme or in defiance of his thought. Nevertheless, it is clear that not all of these categories are of equal relevance to the effort to construct a theory of international relations. The effort to separate the theoretically meaningful categories from those

[66] This difficulty may be demonstrated by the perhaps unconscious ease with which some modern writers present a balance of power picture as *description* and then readily switch to a *prescriptive* continuation of their discussion, despite the semantic and logical problems implied in this procedure.

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which, while important in the total context of international relations, are based on inadequate logical or conceptual assumptions is one on which a few general observations must be made.

Thus, the theoretical significance of the descriptive intention may be open to several alternative interpretations. It may well be argued that as long as the distribution of power, in general terms, in terms of equilibrium or lack of equilibrium, i.e., the implied hegemony of one camp, is merely discussed with the intention of *describing* an objective state of affairs, there can be no question of theoretical implications. A reference to a "balance" of power in such a context would carry no more general meaning than the application of such terminology to a summary of the number of convention delegates pledged to a given presidential aspirant. And, in fact, it is precisely in such situations that the term is finding a new lease on life.

It can be argued, however, that even the meaning of "distribution" and "equilibrium" in an ordinarily descriptive sense may carry with it theoretical implications. If it is desired to establish the general historical conditions to which the rise of certain institutions can be attributed, for instance, this meaning of "balance" may acquire a theoretical significance beyond the scope indicated above. Thus, it may be suggested that modern international law owes its growth to a "balance" of power—in the sense of "distribution" avoiding "hegemony"—during its crucial decades and that without such a "balance" it could not have developed at all, since the strongest state (s) would have had no interest in its growth.[67] It is in situations such as these that the user's context acquires tremendous significance, since it may well be that in applying the term in this sense what was intended was not description, but analysis or a correlation between the balance as prescription and its historical consequences.

Applications of balance of power terminology for propagandistic or self-deceptive purposes similarly may be interpreted in several ways. *A priori*, such application could not carry with it a significance to a general theory of international relations, since it is used for intellectually dishonest purposes. It is intended for dissimulation, not clarification, and certainly not as

[67] I am indebted for this suggestion to Professor Oliver J. Lissitzyn.

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a consistent guide to action. Furthermore, the meanings of "balance" subsumed in this category are in themselves open to considerable logical and conceptual doubts. The usage of the term as connoting peace and stability or war and instability, again, is largely descriptive, or else a pure value judgment of no theoretical significance whatever. The fact that some writers have indulged in this loose terminology merely indicates that the term "balance of power" had tended to become a catch-all to accommodate whatever policies writers wanted to recommend. The frankly propagandistic use of the term is thus merely an extreme species of the same genus.

To a general theory of politics based on Mannheimian concepts of ideology, however, even this category might prove to be of relevance. Should the theory be oriented toward the study of value systems—avowed and tacit—and toward the factors of manipulation of external and internal forces, this area of intentions might acquire some importance. What appears to the student of motivations as dishonesty and self-deception might assume far greater causative significance to a student of psychopathology in international relations.

In the area of concept, of course, the balance of power acquires immediate theoretical significance, deservedly or otherwise. It is deliberately chosen as the major support of a widely accepted method of analyzing intergroup relations. But even here some caution with respect to meanings is necessary. Thus, the usage which speaks of the balance of power in terms indistinguishable from power politics generally should not be given separate consideration, since the application of the phrase here is really misplaced in terms of logical consistency as well as of historical tradition. It would be absolutely correct to consider the balance of power as a refinement of a general system of power politics, should one be postulated, as indeed writers such as Dupuis, Donnadieu, Gentz, and Brougham did consider it. But the essential distinction between policies of power for the sake of power—unrefined by any thought of balancing some state's power with some other state's—and the balance of power as defined by Fay, Gooch, and Fénelon should still be maintained. History is

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full of examples of plain power policies, unqualified by balance notions.

It appears, however, that a theory of international relations which does not insist on the necessity of demonstrating general laws of conduct in terms of actual motivations leaves itself open to attack on grounds of lack of comprehensiveness. And it is this factor which has been responsible for a great deal of the skepticism with which the universal law version of the balance of power as an analytical concept has been treated ever since Justi. The treatment of the balance of power as prescription, in the sense of the guide-and-system connotation, therefore, acquires its theoretical significance in this context. The balancing of power is considered as the primary motivation of governments in this approach and, as Brougham clearly showed, the realization of this motivation assumes the subordination of all other possible policy motivations in international politics, at least insofar as they are inconsistent with the demands of balanced power. To a theory of international relations which relies on demonstrable motivations among policy-makers, therefore, the balance of power as prescription must be a fundamental point of departure.

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AESTHETIC FUNCTIONS IN MODERN POLITICS

By PHILIP RIEFF

THE relations between art and politics have rarely been discussed either in contemporary aesthetics or in political science. Since Hegel's *Philosophy of Fine Arts*, the analysis of art styles as the sensuous objectifications of cultural attitudes has been worked out in detail. But the same method has not been applied to the sensuous objectifications of political action. The removal of art from social life to the museum has also removed it from among the integral concerns of political science. Accepting the popular dichotomy between art and politics, modern political science has long lost its sense of art as *techne*, as a practical instrument of communication and coercion. An older political science did indeed consider "art" an instrument of coercion, curbing what Freud liked to call "the rebelliousness and destructive passions" of the masses and binding them to their rulers. Indeed, perhaps Freud alone among modern masters of social science comprehended art as one of the weapons of coercion in the arsenal of culture. "Works of art," Freud writes, "promote the feelings of identification" and identification is, in the Freudian theory, the modality of authority.[1]

Of course, the finest discussion of art as a political instrument remains Plato's. That first and most astute political scientist understood art strictly as *techne*. Plato's analysis of the subsumption of art to politics is the foundation upon which this discussion of certain aspects of their contemporary relation is constructed. Rejecting the dichotomy of art and politics, Plato viewed politics as itself an art, a craft—*techne*—which subsumed the other arts. The Greek *aesthesis* means "sensation" or "sense perception"; and the term as used today (referring to good taste or to the beautiful) is a recent and considerable narrowing of the original meaning. It is the authentic connotations of "aesthetic" which have the greatest relevance to political science, for the

[1] Sigmund Freud, *The Future of an Illusion*, London, 1928, p. 23.

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aesthetic or sensuous is a permanent aspect of political action.

More precisely, the aesthetic may be an exemplar of a given form of political action, changing as the political forms to which it is appropriate change. The aesthetic forms expressive of parliamentary democracy or of revolutionary movements may offer significant differences from the aesthetic forms accompanying the totalitarian state or monarchy, just as the aesthetic production of the Protestant Church immediately differentiates it from the Roman.[2] It is my assumption here that there are aesthetic or sensuous objectifications appropriate to various stages and types of political action that may be understood as functions of those stages and types.

Following Tolstoy, I would define the "aesthetic" as that activity in which, by means of external signs, human beings communicate feelings to others, who are thereby "infected by these feelings and also experience them." Tolstoy's definition of art, like Plato's, is political. Both define the aesthetic in terms of its function in uniting individuals to contribute to the enthusiastic execution of the purposes of their community. Art is not simply "the expression of man's emotions by external signs." It is neither "as the metaphysicians say, the manifestation of some mysterious Idea of beauty or God," nor "as the aesthetical physiologists say, a game in which man lets off his excess of stored-up energy." Art, for Tolstoy, is not "the production of pleasing objects; and, above all, it is not pleasure." Great art may produce displeasing objects, and its perception may be something quite other than pleasurable. (*Les Fleurs du mal* are pleasurable only in a very ambiguous sense.) Rather, art is a "means of union among men, joining them together in the same feelings," and indispensable for their community, however that community is conceived.

The political process necessarily develops aesthetic functions. Art is joined to politics as an instrument of unity, unity being considered as the proper end of politics. But having placed art in the service of politics, Tolstoy did not neglect to judge both by an end beyond the purely political—that is, by the "well-

[2] See, for example, G. G. Coulton, *Art and the Reformation*, Oxford, 1928, esp. ch. xv ("The Poor Man's Bible").

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being of individuals and of humanity."[3] Thus Tolstoy still submitted to moral criticism the means-relation of the aesthetic to the political. There may be a non-political end, such as freedom or beatitude, in relation to which the political end is only a means. The aesthetic instruments of politics might, therefore, bulwark a unity judged improper from the perspective of an end beyond or contradicting that unity.

The loss of an end beyond the political is perhaps the essential characteristic of modern politics. In opposition to this accelerating trend, democratic politics, like democratic religion, has had a characteristic distrust of unity itself as the appropriate end of political action. Democracy has been disposed to eschew aesthetic devices as instruments of either politics or religion. Art in the service of politics or religion has tended to be magical and authoritarian, rather than critical and democratic—as it is when it plays an autonomous role in a society characterized by autonomous occupations and doctrines operating at best in antagonistic cooperation. Democratic religion, in its anti-hierocratic organization, originally devalued art (especially visual art) as an instrument of unity dangerous to its own discursive form: the "priesthood of all believers." Democratic politics, true to its Protestant origins, also succeeded in devaluing art as an instrument dangerous to its discursive (i.e., parliamentary) form. The doctrine of discursive value was opposed to the use of aesthetic values in Protestant, bourgeois, democratic society.

It is precisely the emptying of discursive values and their replacement by aesthetic that is one of the chief problems of politics in our time. The problem is one a democratic culture needs to recognize as a threat and resolve, if its own aesthetic devices—inherited from an age in revolt against the aesthetics of vision in favor of the aesthetics of hearing—are to survive. Modern antidemocratic politics seems to signal a new functional relation between the aesthetic and the political. The aesthetics of rhetoric is largely displaced by the aesthetics of spectacle as a general device of political unification. The voice itself may become a non-discursive instrument, engaged not so much in argumenta-

[3] Leo Tolstoy, "What is Art?" in *Tolstoy on Art*, translated by Aylmer Maude, London, 1924, p. 173.

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tion as in the communication of commands by states of feeling. Individuals may want no longer to talk, or even to listen to argument. In the age after the Age of Discussion, they may want only to see. Seeing, as in an earlier period of authoritarianism, is again believing. The eye again replaces the ear as the sense organ of political action, and spatial forms replace discursive as the structural modes of such action.

The aesthetic devices considered here are mainly visual, since the manipulation of the visual is the most appropriate device of political unity in an age at least in transition from the Age of Discussion. The three sections of this article attempt to analyze a variety of visual devices employed to create unity in shifting historical contexts. I shall note, first, the changing function of dress fashion as a supplement to political action; second, the spatialization of politics in modern ceremonial; and third, the altered relation of command and obedience implicit in political aesthetics.

I

It can be argued that unity is primarily a rhetorical function, employing those often undemocratic forms that political science has learned to call ideologies, myths, or otherwise discursive symbol systems. Slogans, as condensed vehicles of ideologies, may seem more important means of unifying masses than the relatively superficial spatial and visual means that are the subject of this article. But it is questionable just how discursive a slogan, for example, really is. A slogan is, of course, a combination of words, and words are connected in time and thus have the quality of discursiveness. But it is precisely the characteristic of a slogan that it must strain toward absolute condensation, and in this tendency it approximates a spatial form. A slogan aims at radical concision to gain an immediate and total effect (through assonance, rhythm, rhyming, etc.). It must be remembered as a whole—a spatial, not a discursive, whole.

In the category of spatial forms, perhaps the simplest way of making unity immediate is by that "external sign" most literally worn by *all*: dress. Dress is, however much or little, an aesthetic

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function of all social action, including the political. If visual forms are the most superficial signs of unity, they are also perhaps the most elementary.

Fashion in dress, set in the nineteenth century by the unpolitical Dandy, articulated social distance in a dynamically stratified society. As Veblen formulated what was to become his most fashionable insight, differential positions according to income could best be represented by competitive emulation in such matters as dress. Competitive emulation implies its opposite: identity by polarization. In order to maximize social distance, dress and other aesthetic representations of the middle-class era were by definition style elaborations dictated by a high velocity of style changes.

But the entry of the masses into politics created a countertyranny to the tyranny of fashion as the basic aesthetic elaboration of bourgeois power. The political uniform is the costume of mass identification, a counterdevice to the fragmentation of identification expressed by the variety of costume in the era of middle-class domination. Twentieth-century uniformity of political dress indicates a new confluence of the political and the aesthetic. The countertyranny of uniformity is enforced as a visual representation of the cleansing puritanism of revolutionary mass parties and movements.

The plain style, as the aesthetic image of all revolutionary uniforms, is initially implemented by "political soldiers," and indicates a reorganization of the components of political unity. The original Nazi party uniforms were donned by what Hitler called his detachment of "meeting supervisors," the bully boys whose function was to distress hecklers. These flying squads later formed the nucleus of the S.A. Roehm, the leader of the S.A., was more revolutionary than Hitler, if his own projection of the future German army is taken as a criterion. He envisioned the new model army of Germany as the school as well as the weapon of the masses, training vanguard elements of the masses in a new value system.

New model armies generally serve as schools (for the new discipline) and experimental vanguards of revolutionary re-

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gimes, at least in their early stages.[4] This is the present role of the army in Israeli society. The Israeli army is as much an in-stitution of socialization and ideological training as it is a mili-litical soldier" and "soldier-standing of mass parties as military middle-class parties. nple, certain aspects of the d of Cromwell's army when . Revolutionary movements similation of army and party again bifurcate. It is only a onary task of the army is ac-function as the locus of parti-ical scene, the army tends to ry of social experimentation. ns of political purposes. The armies takes on all the dis-on-revolutionary type. When es of principled shabbiness for orms, it indicates their separa-change appears in the officer ates the neutralization of that the political neutralization of ne contemporary dress of Soviet de, comparing the dress char-h officers with Chinese officer uniforms, that the ... ns are the leaders of a colonial levy, not of an army with revolutionary *élan*.

The formal function of visual uniformity, as of other aesthetic devices serving a political end, is to unite heterogeneous groups

[4] The development and functions of new model armies will be examined in some detail in another article. C. H. Firth's classic study, *Cromwell's Army* (London, 1905), is only one example of a rich literature relevant to the problem.

[5] There is an antinomical possibility. The appearance of different uniform images within a militant society may indicate a breakdown of controls, pointing toward civil war. In middle-class cultures, different style combinations indicate different social classes in a society without legally sanctioned indicators of stratification. In mass cultures, different style combinations indicate polarized power blocs in a society without traditionally sanctioned images of power.

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and individuals into a political instrument that is itself determined by the necessity of varying intensities of militancy. There is a direct correlation between intensity levels of militancy and the aesthetic devices of visual uniformity. An image of militancy was as much the source of the principled plainness of the Calvinists and the Orders of the Counter-Reformation—whatever their differential self-images—as of the early Soviet or Zionist armed parties. Doctrinal militants have usually tried to rule against ostentation as displeasing to God, or to History.

But the sociological meaning of uniformity is not only the representation of group participation and discipline in religiously or politically defined doctrinal groups. A more precise definition of its unique modern function must notice the displacement of discursive meanings of uniformity by aesthetic meanings. The rebellion against the politics of the Age of Discussion[6] is represented as a rebellion against individual fashion, superimposing a mass pattern from below. The ambiguity of mass participation —the great problem of modern politics—has been successfully resolved on the symbolic level, by the manipulation of aesthetic uniformity as a counterimage to the alienation and stratification dynamics of societies characterized by dress fashion and doctrinal competition.

Since Garibaldi's use of the red shirt, the colored shirt has been a typically modern sign not only of solidarization in a militant society, but of the aesthetic displacement of discursive motives. The fact that the colored shirt is a worker's habit points back to the origins of the political uniform as a mass counterimage to hierarchical fashion. Its value is located in the fact that it does not change, no matter what the doctrines of the party may be at any particular moment. The political uniform always tends to maintain itself as principled plainness.

Militancy in a mass society has been emptied of its substantive purposes and become an end in itself. Then, in mass society, principled plainness tends to become principled shabbiness. It creates a visual definition of that form of true

[6] The birthplace of the Age of Discussion, Britain, recognized the danger, prohibiting political uniforms in 1939.

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service characteristic of militant doctrineless societies: one that does not respect differential claims and expectations. There are only two strata recognized as legitimate in the age of doctrineless militancy—the one (leader) and the many (masses). The new politics has reversed the traditional aesthetic organization of leader and led. Uniform dress maintains the nimbus of the leader's intimate relation to the masses, not his distance from them. In aristocratic or middle-class politics, the leader's dress (e.g., top hat and formal or semi-formal attire) asserts his difference from the masses. In mass politics, the leader's dress pledges his identity with the masses. Thus, it is precisely on ceremonial occasions that Hitler and Stalin, as anti-bourgeois leaders, posed in the deliberate shabbiness of the old party costume. The dress uniform has been abolished precisely for ceremonial occasions.

Even where the second-level *farceurs* go all out for braid, medals, gorgeous uniforms, and other refinements, the leader stands apart from them, identified with the masses in his principled shabbiness. This reinforces the party model of anonymity, and at the same time denotes the whole cloth of authority. Hitler carefully maintained his public image as a mass militant, ornamented only by the Iron Cross, second class, which had become the plainest and most widely held distinction of the German common soldier. Before the war situation, he continued to represent himself, even as the head of the state, as a hatless, demobilized soldier in a trench coat, the universally recognized postwar image of militancy—after militancy had lost its purpose. Stalin, particularly in the annual Red Square ceremonials, usually remained simply the party secretary, clothed in the unrelieved drabness of his high-buttoned tunic. And at Stalin's funeral, Malenkov legitimated his succession to the mass party leadership with visual immediacy by assuming precisely the same dress image. Mao still wears, as his public mask, the shabby uniform of the Long March, and this is the general dress habit of the Chinese leadership.

Political soldiers represent themselves in principled shabbiness deliberately to minimize the social distance between leaders and led. All political militants, so far as they seek support

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of the masses, affect puritanism of dress. This has been true of the great captains of armed parties from Cromwell to Stalin. Having to manage morale problems similar to those of armed parties, professional soldiers like Generals Eisenhower and Montgomery, who were more distant than ever in function and perspective from the common soldier, had to assume in World War II the protective aesthetic of dress puritanism to close the symbolic distance and remain "close" to their men. President Eisenhower's principled plainness during his inauguration ceremonial was perhaps more than a matter of taste, when viewed in the context of this iron time.

When political soldiers can indulge themselves in disdain of the masses, as Franco may in Spain, they tend to ornament themselves heavily. Spain, however, is not a mass society. Political soldiers in a mass society usually cannot permit themselves the luxury of public disdain of the masses. Morale must be one of their chief concerns. In his public image, at least, a political soldier must play the unknown son of the unknown people. There is, of course, another permutation: where the political soldier wishes to create a non-political image[7] he may wear more ornamental costumes. But this must not eclipse his militant political dress.

In terms of the relation between the aesthetics of the plain style and the command sequences limited in part by social origins, the political soldier cannot move from the top down, from riches to rags. As a leader of the historyless masses, he can only move from enforced plainness to principled plainness. The plain style among the Puritan army agitators of the seventeenth century is not within the purview of this paper. But it is important to notice the common function of the plain style from the seventeenth to the twentieth century: the representation of democracy. Schools of mass agitation cannot permit visual differentiation of dress images. The lowest and the highest born are to be held together by representational equality, reciprocally in both the electoral and the aesthetic context.

[7] See the Soviet movie, "The Fall of Berlin," Part I, where the actor playing Stalin appears first as a refined country gentleman, pruning his rose bushes—white roses to match his rich white tunic and pants.

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An understanding of the aesthetic strategy of dress in militant "democratic" movements is complicated and refined by the strategy of aristocratic dress. In middle-class society, deliberate style understatement developed as an aristocratic defense against the overdress of the parvenu. This is a counterstyle against competitive emulation that Veblen missed. But aristocratic plainness is not effective in a mass society. The strategy of plainness can best be operated by the lower-class man identifying himself across, not by the aristocratic renegade identifying down.

The political soldier, if he is of aristocratic appearance, has no choice except to play upon his image. There was always something incongruous about General MacArthur's patrician features framed between his squashed hat and open-necked shirt. The rank and file of the American army distrusted his image perhaps more than his history. Among high U.S. officers during World War II, General Stilwell most consistently exploited the morale potential of the plain style. General Patton, at the other extreme, displayed his egoism and his otherwise explicit contempt for the rank and file in his ornamentation. General Eisenhower, treating the American electorate to the rhetoric of militancy during the presidential campaign, affected the plain style in every respect, moving carefully in the image of the political soldier close to the masses. Governor Stevenson's rhetoric was not so militant, nor his style so plain. "Steve" was somehow incongruous to the style of the man; "Ike" held no such incongruity.

Yet the secret of Sir Stafford Cripps's uncommon success in the Labour Party was that he always lectured the rank and file as their lord and schoolmaster. Franklin Roosevelt used his aristocratic image to good advantage in American politics, although Theodore Roosevelt worked hard to discard his own. Like Disraeli's use of his psychological Jewishness, F.D.R. turned his class vice into a mysterious virtue. Sir Oswald Mosely, however, illustrates the failure of an aristocratic attempt to put on a political uniform. He could never wear his colored shirt like a man of plebeian origins. Rather, Sir Oswald always looked as if he were slumming from Mayfair. This was equally his trouble when he was a Communist. His lack of political success was due

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chiefly, no doubt, to the good sense of the British people, but it also was due to his imaginative failure. Above all, a renegade aristocrat must remain an aristocrat, if he desires to act convincingly in the mass situation. There is something approximating an aesthetic law for renegades: to "go over," the renegade must not look as though he has "gone over." Some measure of honest respect for one's past is expected of all converts. Converts must not totally obliterate what they have been, even if, like the *conversos* of Spain, they hate most what they have been.

The totalitarian party, as a commonly uniformed militant community, narrows the social distance enforced in earlier societies either by aristocratic uniqueness or by middle-class competition in appearance values. This is done in the name of a common ethical goal of fighting effectiveness. There is a parallel in the common dress enforced by armies. The difference between armed parties and armies, however, is that in armies the common uniform is understood as imposed, while in armed parties, the common uniform is understood as voluntary. It is adopted as a felt need, as an expression and index of political unity. The euphoric value of common dress is higher when it is understood as voluntary, solidarizing all levels of the totally mobilized population.[8]

However, the mass party and the army are assimilated to each other insofar as the masses are treated as an industrial army. The distinction between worker and soldier tends to disappear. Both are subject to the same discipline, and play equivalent roles as battle potential. In terms of the new spatial criteria available to political maneuvers, the distinction between "home" front and "battle" front disappears (as the "battleground" has disappeared as the spatial criterion available to military maneuvers), and all elements of social life are treated as "battle potential." Generals must be as interested in the discipline of trade unions and other skill groups as they are in the discipline of divisions.

[8] The distinction between self-selected armed parties and conscripted populations points, of course, to a crucial difference between religious and modern political armed parties. Total mobilization is a phenomenon which first appears in the French Revolution, and is quite antithetical to the ethic of any of the Churches Militant. The sect achieves part of its militancy by uniformity of visual identification. But uniformity of dress is in this case a doctrinal element in a militancy recruited only by self-selection, never by conscription or birth.

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"Labor" must not disrupt logistical schedules. Teachers must not subvert "morale."

It is interesting that the combat dress of American soldiers in World War II was commonly called a "fatigue uniform." The worker becomes a soldier and the soldier a worker. Both are eliminated from the decision-making roles that characterize participation in a democratic process. The armed party cannot be a mechanism for the direct implementation of discussion, any more than can the internal structure of any military organization. Rather, the armed party is a mechanism for enforcing mass discipline in a permanent war situation assimilated to the characteristic situation of professional armies, i.e., one demanding militancy undirected by stable, discursive motives.

In totalitarian societies, party debate becomes party ceremonial, with identity of dress as one of the chief aesthetic devices instrumenting the new political unity. Discursive argument is a less efficient basis of identification than non-discursive visualization. The problem of mass participation, met in the Age of Discussion by the institutions of representative democracy, has been resolved in what might be called the Age of Administration by converting the masses into extras at party spectacles. Militant politicians must become, as Hitler insisted, aestheticians of militancy, as mass politics has become aesthetized and unity *per se* becomes the final rather than the instrumental end of social life.

II

The specific trends of aesthetization in contemporary mass politics operate not only as an internal dynamic of unity, but as an external representation of the doctrineless militant society before a potential world audience understood as equally doctrineless, and thus as equally available to submission before the spectacle of superior militancy. Given the correlate emptying of doctrinal contents from contemporary political warfare, and the development of mass media of aesthetic communication, the staging of party ceremonial may be based upon effects visible to the camera eye as an aesthetic weapon, rather than upon effects visible to the human eye as a critical witness of political

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processes. Political ceremonial has developed purposes beyond both the immediacy of uniform dress and the stabilization of power relations through spurious mass participation. The technique of the camera eye has broadened the political stage to the level of world-wide visibility. The fact of the absolute control of the leadership over the masses is available to the eyes of everyone outside the structure of control itself, and has changed the entire meaning of being an eye-witness from an active to a passive implication.

Political ceremonial thus may be considered in other than its immediate effects upon the actual participants. It is not directed solely, nor perhaps even primarily, at the extras involved. The camera eye, far more selective than the human eye, has introduced new techniques of domination. The aim of the ceremonial itself now transcends its aesthetic immediacy, being organized in terms of future screen projection. Ceremonialization has been united with a phenomenon new to the history of politics, universal theater. When viewed from a seat in a theater—or, originally, by the diplomatic envoys of potential enemy or friendly nations in a theater defined as exclusively political, such as Red Square—the exhibition of the capacity to set masses in motion must impress the viewer. (The distinction between friendly and enemy nations is irrelevant to ceremonial in a mass society. Both need equally to be impressed.)

Empty of discursive content, political ceremonial demonstrates to the widest possible audience that, in the constant war of nerves characteristic of modern society, the viable battle potential that is the masses is an aesthetic instrument in the hands of their rulers. For example, during the Olympic games of 1936, the Nazis transformed the Berlin citizens into stagehands and extras to prepare the city for foreign spectators. The administration issued new city dog-curbing ordinances. The fronts of readily visible areas of depressed housing were redecorated. According to a joke widely told among Berliners, the national slogan had been changed to "Ein Volk, Ein Reich, Ein Theater." There are the same tendencies in every city and in every regime. All life has been politicized, and all politics has taken on the quality and form of theatrical performances.

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War has become the biggest show on earth, with Gotterdammerung, as Hitler thought, perhaps the final gigantic event in what is to be treated in every important sense as a spectacle. For the rest, the spectators are given programs that identify the actors and the plot during a limited engagement only.

The Nazis did not have the scope for ceremonialization that technology was to provide only a decade later. The possibilities of aesthetization are increased enormously since the home itself has become available as a theater. Through television, political ceremonial is potentially available at all times to the masses, who act as permanent spectators on themselves.

What the spectators see is an anonymous pattern of solidarity. The individuality of any pinpoint in the aesthetic pattern is impossible to discern. All individual participants, except the leader as star and the few supporting players about him, are dissolved into the production of the ceremonial itself. The technology of the reproduction of ceremonials demonstrates the degree to which politics has become a matter of aesthetic experiments in mass mobilization. Indeed, its effects are achieved through a process of mass fixation similar to the star fixation created by the movies as an attention area.

With politics fixated on the visual level, public speech (given the fact that it no longer has any decision-making function) becomes increasingly ceremonial. The vocabulary of ceremonial speech tends to cluster around polar friend-enemy images, e.g., *Tovarischen, Volk,* Friends, Jews, Capitalists, Communists, etc. This spurious intimacy with the anonymous and patterned mass of extras serves much the same purpose the term "brother" served at revival meetings in the nineteenth century. Except for the centralization of spontaneity in the leader, mass ceremonial and revival meetings share the same aesthetic function: to provide a euphoric or ecstatic sense of community among relative strangers, brought together from disparate ideological, spatial, and occupational situations. (The Soviet use of Youth Festivals may be best described in these terms.) The euphoric focus is the star performer, the revivalist preacher, the Leader.

The comparative absence of friendship vocabulary clusters in ceremonial speech may denote the failure of a movement to

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capture its potential audience. The decline of the friendship vocabulary in non-Stalinist left propaganda between the wars indicates the privatization of the intellectuals making the propaganda, their growing indifference to the logic of militancy, and their irrelevance to political action. The relation of progressive and radical intellectuals to modern politics has been assimilated to that of artists. And the relation of the artist-intellectual to mass politics is in turn another index of ceremonialization, and of the general aesthetic functions implicated in modern politics.

The art of political ceremonial was borrowed second-hand from business. But business learned its ceremonial techniques from art.[9] Wherever art escaped, business followed, to transform art into advertising.[10] Faced with the universalization of politics in doctrineless militant societies, the artist-intellectual has been polarized between two alternatives: either his work has to be "politically committed"[11] or privatized into strictly delimited esoteric availability. The trend is to allow only such art as can be managed as political advertisement. Examples can be taken not only from the obvious case of Soviet composers and artists, but from the vogue of governmentally commissioned war paintings, or from the renascence of mural painting as an ornament of bureaucratic office buildings. The fresco style must always be the major art form of bureaucracies, ecclesiastical or secular. Works of art are thus made available on a scale commensurate with mass objectives. In contrast, literary art must be privately apprehended. Literary forms, being temporal rather than spatial, can never provide aesthetic instruments of domination in any way approximating the effectiveness of pyramids, open tombs (e.g., the Lenin-Stalin mausoleum), statues, etc. But whatever

[9] Edward Bernays, in his pioneer study on the aesthetics of advertising, reverses the process and has art following business. Cf. also Harold D. Lasswell's "The Rise of the Propagandist," in *The Analysis of Political Behaviour*, London, 1948.

[10] A perfect example of business following the most esoteric art styles is the appropriation of surrealism as the dominant style of window-dressing in American upper-class shops and department stores, imitated from French equivalents. Note also billboards and other forms of visual advertising in France.

[11] For example, the "committed" movies of Eisenstein, or the novels of Howard Fast or earlier practitioners of proletarian fiction. Picasso experienced the difficulties of "committed" art when his party disapproved of his memorial drawing of Stalin. Cf., Herbert Read, "The State as Patron," in *University Observer*, I, No. 1 (Winter 1947), pp. 3-9.

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the medium, in totalitarian culture art must be legitimated by official sponsorship. What is not publicly relevant will not be sponsored, and what is not sponsored automatically increases the likelihood of sanctions against the artist.

Art and business have thus suffered a reversal of roles. As art has become more and more privatized, in order to escape, first, the pressure of science,[12] and second, the banality created by the advertising technology of business and politics, private business has become more and more politicized as its art has created public identification with private power symbols. The whole structure of American private business is enveloped in an aura of public legitimation and, indeed, of identification with government. This is the major function of institutional advertising, which has become perhaps more important than product advertising in the mass circulation magazines. Big business has developed a political aura, and when a family name is the name of the aura (e.g., Ford, DuPont) the family itself acquires tremendous prestige without being subject to any formal mode of political responsibility.

The stabilization of big business within the political aura has structured national prestige relations on the model of extended families. The image of glamor has shifted from the self-made man to third-generation executives in public institutions. Silas Lapham would be much less interesting today than he was to the reporter whom W. D. Howells dispatched at the beginning of his novel to cover the big story of an earlier American culture. The American dream has developed a dominant scenery of backgrounds. The wish-fulfillment mechanism of the American dream has been reversed from an address to the future to an address to the past. The reversal has given totalitarian regimes the opportunity to legitimate themselves as "real democracies" as against the "pluto-democracies" of the West. American ad-

[12] For the reaction of art to science and technology, see, for example, Paul Klee's satirical painting, "The Limits of Reason." In its esoteric reaction, art treats itself as a mysterious and inaccessible universe, like Klee's sun. There is an autonomous sphere of art which the ladders of science cannot reach. The general aesthetization of the non-aesthetic in modern art (e.g., abstract painting) may be understood as a reaction to the de-aesthetization of the aesthetic (e.g., the reproduction industry). The aesthetization of modern politics may be considered a complement of the esoteric character of the decision-making process.

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vertising models—e.g., the "distinguished man" images and the woman as mannequin—have no doubt helped to confirm pejorative versions of the United States as a "pluto-democracy."

American private business has been nationally sentimentalized by its advertising in terms of certain national attributes: freedom, technical efficiency, service, etc. American advertising has glamorized technical efficiency in particular as a political standard. The Squibb corporation, which is perhaps best known for its toothpaste and mineral oil, advertises itself with a picture of a little Austrian boy ecstatically clutching a pair of American-made shoes, "the most beautiful thing in the world." (The ad continues: "Crow, little Hans, beam with delight at your shoes. You make our American leather, and neat, machine stitching, something we never thought it could be. You make of it hope that we in America may use our strength wisely and well . . . hope that in time, with experience, you and your people may learn to have faith again . . . in yourselves, in each other . . . and in us.") The whole effort of American foreign policy necessarily suffers from the identification of politics and business—an identification that is "necessary" because it is rooted in our political culture. Neat, machine stitching is not necessarily equivalent to any political value, and may indeed contradict some. Technical efficiency cannot properly be treated as an element of political value. The identification of business attainments with national values is limited by the specific property structure of a nation. Steel is not a battleship. Even highly disciplined industrial armies are reluctant to die for other than non-instrumental values. American policy finds the range of its concerns constantly expanding. In a permanent war situation, it is an important policy problem to review the historic American emphasis on instrumental values. It may be as serious an ideological liability to export economic as to export military aid. A world-wide propaganda system cannot be operated in terms of institutional advertising. America needs to export a radically different value commodity. But this commodity cannot be manufactured, or codified by a governmental agency. This is the ambiguity of America's role in the ideological world struggle.

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The pre-emption of public symbols by private institutional structures is an ambiguity in the democratic process that has been evident since the Reformation, when the sect and its particularist business endeavors were identified as defining the moral structure of a "holy community." In the holy community, business was still subsumed under public morality. But the relation was reversed as capitalism developed. (This is Weber's final theme in *The Protestant Ethic.*) In the next development, the new politics pre-empted all private moral and public prestige symbols, thus completing the thrust of business. This pre-emption has incorporated all the arts of mass display and salesmanship, and the fine arts supporting them. Finally, all aesthetic skills available in totalitarian culture are focused on the art of politics. Or, put more precisely, the art of politics becomes a more purely aesthetic skill.

Hitler's admiration of the arts of commercial advertising is too well known to discuss here. Certainly, one major criterion for his choice of a party emblem and party flag was "aesthetic effect." Politics becomes a problem of color, of external signs rather than internal doctrine. What is needed is something that carries a simple effect "as great as that of a poster." It must have the resonance of a call to the colors. Therefore, white was rejected for the Nazi flag because it was "not a color that carries people away. It is suitable for associations of chaste virgins, but not for the overpowering movement of a revolutionary time." Black was equally unsuitable. It was not "thrilling enough." White and blue were "out of the question," despite the "wonderful effect from the aesthetic point of view," probably because they were the established Zionist colors. The external sign needed to help create a new political unity, according to the former corporal of the imperial army, was one that could legitimate the party as the true descendant of Hohenzollern glory at the same time that it exploited some racist symbol. Thus, the party colors finally chosen were the imperial German colors—red, white, and black—and the swastika became the emblem.[13]

[13] Adolph Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, New York, 1939, pp. 734-35. Goebbels, in his novel *Michael*, writes, "Leaders and masses are as little a problem as painter and color."

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III

The characteristic aesthetic functions serving modern politics are most clearly described in the relation of the two actors present in the ceremonial situation: the leader and the masses. The leader is the only individual actor. The masses serve as extras. As business art narrowed the attention area of the masses by techniques of repetition and ubiquitous poster images focusing on one product, political art has shifted the focus to one man. Concentration on a single personality is an aesthetic function of political action in a mass society. In the single personality of the leader, aesthetic and political necessities fuse.

As in politics, so in art, the optimum psychological power is achieved by concentration on a single personality. The poetic form which produces the most intense aesthetic effect is tragedy. Aristotle found *Oedipus* a model of tragedy (and induced his *Poetics* from it) precisely because of the purity of its focus on a single action and a single hero. Comedy and epic, Aristotle noticed, never sought the same emotional intensity, but rather tried to create a counterpoint of characters and variety of action and scene. Similarly, in the poetics of politics, the democratic process has no image of tragedy. Unlike dictatorships, the optimistic drama of parliamentary democracy can afford a plurality of protagonists and aesthetic detail.

Aesthetic necessity confirms political necessity. The star system achieves the most successful "psychological abolition" of mass apathy. Plainly, the star of mass politics operates quite differently from, for example, the monarchical leader. The monarchical leader excludes all spontaneity and personalization from his public image. Franz Joseph or George V performed as lifelessly as their images on the national coin. The political star, on the other hand, absorbs into his image everything that is spontaneous and personal. In constitutional monarchy, the political star is absorbed in the ceremonial office. In anti-constitutional dictatorships, the political star may be said to absorb the ceremonial office. Representative democracy exhibits a mediate type.

In aesthetic terms, the mass leader may be called an ex-

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pressionist. He operates, like the artist who preceded him, inventively, as an anti-traditionalist. This is the opposite of the monarchical or parliamentary leader. Aesthetic experimentalism, limited to professional art and the private life of bohemia forty years ago, has been transformed into aesthetic experimentalism on the level of mass politics. Perhaps it is no accident that Hitler aspired to be an artist. The nation was treated as his expressionist canvas. A hatred of conventions for their restrictions and regulation of spontaneous aesthetic style has been transformed into a hatred of social institutions for their restrictions and regulation of spontaneous political style.

Hitler called off the mobilization of two million troops as a personal caprice. The order reversals of the expressionist politician create a basic tension within modern militant societies, which are polarized between the free aesthetic star and all-embracing bureaucratic command channels.[14] The star—viewed psychologically—has an ambivalent relation to bureaucracy. But the competitive tensions within and between bureaucratic organs necessitate precisely that discretion resides in a single figure. A plurality of bureaucratic structures is equally necessary to the star to avoid the threat of personal and clique competitiveness. As sole arbiter of competitive rivalries, the entire structure becomes aware of its fundamental dependence upon his integrating personality. Thus, the star can neutralize any tendencies toward competitive thrusts in his direction.

As caste was once the most perfect spatial elaboration of power relations, the topography of totalitarian ceremonial now mirrors the isolation of the leader become a star—as his dress expresses his spurious intimacy. Symmetry is the universal frame for the leadership situation. Court etiquette was always spatialized in symmetrical designs, to indicate the status locations of various figures and offices. The aesthetics of modern political ceremonial makes use of the same principles. But, instead of having figures grouped around the royal leader, mass ceremonial re-emphasizes the emptiness of the space immediate-

[14] This is reflected in the tension between Hitler's personal information channels (which came to reflect his own fantasies and thus systematically misinformed him) and the parallel (and more reality-adequate) information channels of the regular army.

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ly around the star. The space between Hitler and the first ranks of the symmetrically arranged blocs of extras who performed at Nuremberg was quite clearly used to delineate the figure of the leader in a vast topographic allegory, characterized by the general difficulty of discerning personal characteristics.

The star, however else he may be discerned, is immediately recognized by his entrances. Hitler learned early to enter party ceremonials from the rear. The procession up the center aisle served to identify him as coming out of the anonymous mass at the same time it spatialized his separation from them. His entrances were staged with all the skill first-rate technicians of the aesthetics of ceremonial could muster. He marched down the center aisle to the ominous repetitiveness of a military drumbeat. Auditory forms, necessary to the implementation of visual and topographic forms, were always exploited.

On the auditory level, as on the visual, repetition creates expectation through the restatement of the theme in differing contexts and by the cumulative weight of new details. It is a hypnotic device in the sense that it is preparatory. The extras and the larger world spectatorship are prepared, by a certain qualitative progression in the auditory and visual repetition, to expect the uniform dress image and the spatial distance of the star, and to accept them as absolutely right and necessary. Rhythm bulwarks mass discipline by further linking expectation to acquiescence. Coordinated movement—marching, saluting, chanting in unison—expresses the muscular imagination of the garrison state's ceremonial forms. A rhythm is a promise and, as such, a full alternative to political rhetoric. It moves the subject from one state of feeling to another. There remains only to notice that Freud thought that the aesthetics of muscular movement must always describe the movement from life toward death. The musculature, he wrote, was the organ of death.[15]

[15] Sigmund Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, London, 1947, p. 56. See also George Orwell, *The Lion and the Unicorn*, London, 1941, pp. 20-22: "One rapid but fairly sure guide to the social atmosphere of a country is the parade-step of its army. A military parade is really a kind of ritual dance, something like a ballet, expressing a certain philosophy of life. The goose-step, for instance, is one of the most horrible sights in the world, far more terrifying than a dive bomber. It is simply an affirmation of naked power; contained in it, quite consciously and intentionally, is the vision of a boot crashing down on a face. . . . Why is the goose-step not used in England? There are,

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The middle-class novelist Stendhal thought that art was "une promesse du bonheur." The art of totalitarian politics is "une promesse de la mort."

The aesthetic function of totalitarian ceremonial is expressed in the relation between the repetitive progression of the meeting and the expectation of the climax in the appearance of the star. As a form of ratification of the executive's action and prerogative, the progression of the meeting is designed to force the audience to a consciousness of their dependent relation to the single protagonist. The ceremonial of discovering the One among the Many, and the progression of expectation that precedes the discovery, is a standard aesthetic device of totalitarian stage-management. Dramatic effects may be managed with as much sophistication as any technician of melodrama could demand.

The dramatic techniques of political ceremonial—the merging of the meaning of participation and spectatorship, the build-up of spectator expectation around the One—was recorded in a remarkable report of a Wallace rally published in *The Call* on September 10, 1947. It is a first-rate description of aesthetic functions implemented as political ceremonial:

> Offstage stands the director. At his command the audience has been plunged into utter darkness. In the darkness each of the thousands is all alone and waits. The expectant silence and the loneliness grows heavier. If this continues surely someone will cry out. The director gives his sign . . . the corsage of loudspeakers pinned to the roof of the Garden booms out a welcome. At this meeting no chairman presides, the audience is to be its own master—by following the script and responding to the cues. Out of the audience itself, two voices are heard and the spotlight picks out their faces while the mikes amplify their voices. A boy and a girl speak to each other of their devoted love, their words weave a pattern for the night. They tell of their youthful hopes, they linger on their fears. "If only Franklin Roosevelt were here," says the boy. "He would know the answer." Suddenly the spotlight goes out and the two are submerged in the same darkness and silence that have swallowed the thousands around them. In the next moment up on the stage another spot rings the face of a well-built

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heavens knows, plenty of army officers who would be only too glad to introduce some such thing. It is not used because the people in the street would laugh. . . . In the British army the drill is rigid and complicated , . . but without definite swagger; the march is merely a formalized walk."

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man. "No, I am not Franklin Roosevelt," he says. "I am only his son." He pauses. The impact of the name catches the many-headed ear. The applause becomes a wave lashing through the Garden, mounting. . . .

And so it goes. Each speaker is brought carefully into the spotlight with introductions voiced by the boy or girl. . . . But none of them is the One. They, too, are among the Many, seeking the One.

And then the climax. A voice booms out over the loudspeakers. "Franklin Roosevelt is no longer with us. But there is a man in our midst who wears his mantle." From every side of the great arena, circles of light burst forth. The spotlights flash back and forth across the crowd, roaming, searching among the clusters of white faces. The loudspeaker continues: "Do you want to hear from him? His name is———!" and from the audience comes the roar, "Henry Wallace!" The loudspeaker comes in, its volume rising. "Yes, his name is Henry Wallace, Henry Wallace!" The spotlights move faster through the darkness, as if seeking to find and pinpoint the face of every man in the crowd. The lights move in fast, jerky, excited movements. Faster and faster they turn, seeking out the sadly groping, now twisting and turning mass. The chanted name grows louder and louder. The scattered voices are reaching out toward each other. The threads of sound are merging until they are almost a visible blanket. The uproar crashes on the eardrums, the spotlights hammer on the retina, louder and faster and brighter. The tension mounts and breaks suddenly as the beams retreat into the darkness, leaving one strong light from above focussed directly on the lectern. Behind it is the man. . . .

Henry Wallace received better stage-management than any other political leader in American history. Never before was the progression of expectancy managed so well. Unfortunately, a build-up is not enough. In this case, the man never matched his staging. There was always a fatal letdown soon after Wallace stepped into the halo.

In general, the United States has not developed the art of political ceremonial, although it lies ready at hand in American sport. The potentiality of sports events as a model of political ceremonial was long realized in the famous Sokol demonstrations. The aesthetic effect of the massed gymnastics resulted precisely from the fact that the maneuvers were a collective nationalist gesture.

An excellent example of an American sports event as a potential model for political ceremonial is furnished by the strategy of mounting spectator tension at the annual All-Star football game in Chicago. Each star is introduced by a loudspeaker blar-

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ing his name and school. Massed bands play his school's anthem as he trots out majestically into a darkened stadium filled with 100,000 people. One lone beam from a powerful searchlight in a stadium tower haloes the hero as from heaven, until it is time to pick out the next one. In American college football massed cheering and giant poster sections made up of students organized in desired colors and patterns of light and darkness share many of the elements standard to European mass manipulation. If future political aestheticians need to develop American political spectacle, they have the material prepared for them in college football.

One might generalize that night ceremonials are psychically more coercive than day ceremonials (as Hitler reported), that open-air ceremonials have a greater aesthetic immediacy than those held indoors. The manipulation of light, of course, is a definitive frame of all ceremonials, no less important than the organization of space. The uses of light have been fully developed in totalitarian politics. The star, when he appears, must be haloed in an aura of light. The aura, as Walter Benjamin has pointed out, will legitimate him as unique. Hitler carefully managed the uses of light in his own appearances. His theatrical abilities are worth noting in detail:

> In his good hours [Hitler] exerts a power of suggestion which would be surprising if shown in an experimental demonstration, but we must always remember that a mighty suggestive power precedes [him] before his actual appearance. . . . We must remember the extreme impressionability of crowds under sustained influence. . . .
>
> The German people is already transformed into a mechanical chorus, for it is no longer its mental attitude that counts, but only its technical approval. The symbol of this mechanization is the extraordinary desk or lectern from which Hitler speaks. . . . This desk, of which at that time, the spring of 1936, there were five examples, has a number of buttons, by means of which Hitler gives certain signals while he is speaking; he gives the sign for film photographs to be taken[16] and for the dimming or brightening and the direction of the searchlights. By thus regulating the mood of the audience he increases the will to applaud until at another signal the Storm Troops by clapping and shouting let loose general applause. . . .

[16] F.D.R., during the war years, exercised similar prerogatives, personally captioning all news pictures of himself and censoring those he found unsuitable. See an unpublished Ph.D. dissertation: William McKinley Moore, "FDR's Image: A Study in Pictorial Symbols," University of Wisconsin, 1946.

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> Under the glare of searchlights, thus controlled by his suggestion machine, human beings are lost to sight and nothing remains but the inchoate mass, the mechanical chorus. . . .[17]

The masses have become a mechanical chorus, spectators in an aesthetically organized self-exhibition, mobilized for whatever purposes an unaccountable decision-making process demands. Political ceremonial aims to elicit only the technical approval of the masses. In mass politics, as in all other aspects of modern culture, spectatorship has become the method of participation. Spectatorship stabilizes power relations; participation disrupts them, or at least provides a possibility of disruption.

The principle of the mechanical chorus has triumphed in every area of modern culture. Heiden's terminology points to the ultimate problem in a discussion of the aesthetics of power. Modern instruments of domination can be understood by an analysis of the parallel rise of mass audiences for the fine arts and sport, and for politics. The great romantics, like Goethe and, in a new context definitive for the modern temper, Nietzsche, thought life itself had to be lived as a "work of art." Modern morality, as it has become aesthetized, has become profoundly anti-political. The unique contemporary challenge to democratic policy is to develop specific devices for redirecting spectatorship from spurious to genuine participation, to displace aesthetic by discursive criteria. Whether this is possible in a culture that has lost contact with its characteristic doctrine and its constraints is a problem beyond the limits of this article.

[17] Konrad Heiden, *One Man Against Europe*, London, 1939, p. 41.

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SOVIET AND COMINTERN POLICIES TOWARD THE BRITISH GENERAL STRIKE OF 1926*

By MORTON H. COWDEN

THE first general strike in the history of England, with its mass labor action, was bound to attract strong interest from the workers' state which proclaimed as its rallying cry: "Workers of All Countries, Unite!" Soviet concern for the British working class followed logically from the active participation of Marx and Engels in the movement, and the continued attention shown by Lenin to this important "section" of the "world proletariat."

Thus far, however, comment in English on the immediate Soviet and Comintern reactions to the nine-day strike has been scanty and inaccurate. The late Bernard Pares wrote that the General Strike ". . . in Moscow was expected to bring about a transference of power to the British trade unions. . . . The news of this failure was described by Radek in Moscow as equivalent to a bomb-shell."[1] Professor Vernadsky declared that the General Strike, ". . . . contrary to communist expectations, soon ended in complete failure."[2] And in the late 1930's Borkenau wrote of alleged Soviet maneuvers after the strike was over: "From the Moscow point of view, however, now, if ever, was the moment to speak of socialist betrayal. But nothing of the kind happened. . . ."[3] Unfortunately, Borkenau did not make use of source material in writing his chapter on the strike.[4] This article will attempt to spell out in more detail what the Soviet and Comintern leaders and press actually believed was the true character of the General Strike, what policies they adopted as a result, and what expectations they entertained.

* This article is based on the author's Essay accepted for the Certificate of the Russian Institute, Columbia University.

1 Bernard Pares, *A History of Russia*, New York, 1950, p. 494.

2 George Vernadsky, *A History of Russia*, New Haven, 1951, p. 315.

3 Franz Borkenau, *A History of the Communist International*, New York, 1939, p. 282.

4 See "Bibliographical Note" on ch. XVI, *ibid.*, p. 435.

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It is dangerous to attempt broad generalizations on the basis of one incident. However, by spotlighting these nine days, we shall try to demonstrate that in this case (1) non-Soviet writers were too eager to cast all Soviet opinions in an iron mold—a "line"—disregarding the range of Soviet interpretations; (2) the Soviet leaders, working within a Marxist framework, were capable of adopting a realistic appraisal of a major political and economic event occurring outside of the Soviet Union, without painting it only black or white; and that in general (3) there is an urgent need for a store of careful monographs on Soviet phenomena upon which larger conclusions can rest soundly.

Events Leading up to the General Strike

The General Strike was called primarily in support of the miners of England. Therefore, the events leading up to the strike revolved, in large measure, around the coal question. After World War I, especially after 1920, the importance in England of coal as a fuel began to decline. The mine owners attempted to shift the burden of the slump onto the miners by forcing wage cuts. The trade unions gathered their forces under the General Council of the Trades Union Congress (TUC), which had begun to assume the role of a "general staff" of British labor. In the summer of 1925 the wage agreement between the miners and owners ran out. Economic conditions in the coal fields had gone from bad to worse. Unemployment soared. The owners pressed for lower wages and a lengthened working day to make up for a drastic cut in their profits. The miners refused. On July 31, 1925, "Red Friday," the TUC pledged its full support to the miners, even to the extent of a general sympathetic strike. Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin interceded and proposed a coal subsidy (to keep the economic status quo), pending an investigation of the entire coal question by a royal commission. Both parties agreed. A four-man Coal Commission headed by Herbert Samuel undertook the task. The Commission reported back in March 1926. Briefly, it recommended a discontinuance of the subsidy; either a decrease in wages or a lengthened workday; nationalization of royalties; and a thorough reorganization of the whole industry to pro-

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mote much-needed efficiency. The Report satisfied neither party. The owners called for a drastic wage cut and an increased workday. The miners proclaimed: "Not a penny off the pay, not a second on the day." Negotiations became futile. The mine operators declared that the 1924 wage agreement would be terminated on May 1, 1926. On April 30, the miners were locked out. On the same day, the government, acting under the Emergency Powers Act of 1920, declared a state of emergency. On May 1 the TUC voted almost unanimously for a general strike to begin at midnight, May 3. On the morning of May 4, 1926, England found itself in the throes of its first general strike.

As the labor crisis in England grew, *Izvestiya* and *Pravda* kept their readers adequately informed. On March 12, 1926, *Izvestiya* carried a small dispatch announcing the publication of the Report of the Coal Commission, and *Pravda* went into more detail. The April 3 issue of *Izvestiya* came out openly with two small headlines: "Before the Greatest Industrial Catastrophe"; "On the Eve of a New Conflict in England." The news dispatch reported that the negotiations between the miners and the mine owners had been stalled.

A front-page cartoon of April 8 in *Izvestiya* brought the situation to the prominent attention of the reader. It was entitled "In England," and pictured Baldwin, Chancellor of the Exchequer Winston Churchill, and the Secretary of State for Home Affairs William Joynson-Hicks peeping over the top of a bomb labeled "Conflict in the Coal Industry." A burning fuse was attached to the bomb at a spot marked "May 1926." The caption read: "Bomb for Their Own English Production."

On April 11 both *Pravda* and *Izvestiya* reported the official refusal of the Miners' Federation to accept the recommendations of the Report. On April 17 *Pravda* carried a news dispatch announcing that "Negotiations Between the English Workers and Mine Owners Reached an Impasse." Both newspapers on April 30 reported the convening on the previous day of the Special Conference of the TUC which was to vote for the strike on May 1. Commenting on this conference and basing their information

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on "authoritative sources," both agreed that the General Council of the TUC would back up the miners.

An article written by D. Zaslavski was published in *Izvestiya*'s issue of May 1. It bore the title, "On the Eve." The author declared: "The working class of England is going . . . to make the First of May the initial day of a great revolutionary struggle." Heretofore, the Soviet press had reported the events in England cautiously and accurately. Zaslavski, sounding the first note of revolutionary interpretation, was probably carried away by the fervor of feeling that sweeps the ranks of international labor on its great holiday—May Day.

Basic policy for the Comintern had been set forth as early as April 25. The Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI) issued a manifesto called "Great Events Preparing in Great Britain":[5]

> The capitalists are attempting by determined blows to destroy the British labour movement and to depress the standard of living of the workers of all countries. . . . the international labour movement must stand firm, like one man, in an unbreakable united front against the common enemy. It is a question of the vital interests of the workers of all countries. . . . The miners' strike would mean a general strike and a general strike can not remain an economic struggle, it would become a political struggle, that is to say, the proletariat will fight against the capitalists, class will fight against class.

The cleavage-between-masses-and-leaders theme was introduced as follows: "The working masses are ready to fight, but their leaders are partly hesitant, some of them are betraying the fight before the battle." And further:

> The Communist International with full consciousness of its responsibility declares once again that it is prepared to place on one side all differences of opinion which divide the Communist International on principle from the reformist elements, in order to bring about the international solidarity action of the world proletariat at all costs and under all circumstances.
>
> The last penny for the English miners!
>
> Long live the internationalism of the world proletariat!

According to its General Secretary, A. Lozovski, the Red International of Labour Unions (Profintern) was founded in July

[5] *International Press Correspondence*, VI, No. 35 (April 29, 1926), pp. 527-28 (hereafter cited as *Inprecorr*).

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1920 "as an organization unifying the revolutionary elements of the world trade union movement."[6] Its headquarters were located in Moscow, like the Comintern's, and it proclaimed: "The Red International of Labour Unions stands on the platform of the class struggle and considers that there is no other way out for the working class but to forcibly overthrow the bourgeoisie and set up the Dictatorship of the Proletariat."[7] News, decrees, and theses of the Profintern were published regularly in *Inprecorr*, the weekly journal of the Comintern. It would be correct to label the Profintern the labor arm of the Comintern.

As early as April 18 the RILU set down the course which it was to follow throughout the General Strike. A message from the Executive Bureau of the Profintern, signed by Lozovski, to the International Federation of Trade Unions at Amsterdam, ran as follows:

> The approaching conflict in the English mining industry bears a decidedly international character; it demands that the working class in all countries and all the international organizations adopt an attentive and serious attitude toward it. . . . The defeat of the English miners would be the signal for reducing the standard of living not only of the English, but of the entire International proletariat. In these circumstances the organized united action of all sincere friends of the English proletariat is an absolute necessity.
>
> In view of this the Executive Bureau of the Red International of Labour Unions proposes common action in order to help the English miners in their rightful struggle against the attack of capital. . . .[8]

The Amsterdam International rejected this proposal of a united front.

On April 22 the RILU proposed to the General Council of the TUC that it (the Council) call an international conference of all trade unions wishing to render aid to the miners, in order to coordinate and regulate the assistance to be given them. On April 25 the RILU officially called on all its affiliated organizations to join in a united front of labor against the capitalist offensive.

The Communist Party of Great Britain in April 1926 num-

[6] A. Lozovski, *What Is the Red International of Labour Unions?*, Moscow, 1927, p. 9.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 21.
[8] *Inprecorr*, VI, No. 33 (April 22, 1926), p. 508.

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bered some six thousand members.[9] Although the Labour Party refused to admit the Communist Party into its ranks, "still stronger was communist influence within the trade unions."[10] On April 30, the *Workers Weekly*, the organ of the CPGB, published an appeal issued by the Party to the Special Conference of Trade Union Executives. It declared: "We call upon the Conference of Executives to reaffirm the policy of class solidarity. It is its plain duty alike to the miners and to their class, to issue a call to every worker in Britain . . . and . . . to the workers of the world, to give the British miners every possible backing. Declare for a United Front. . . ."

Thus, even before the strike began, International Communism boldly took a stand in support of the position that it assumed the British workers had taken. The line was a familiar one for this period: a united front of the world proletariat against world capitalism; and a charge of "betrayal" of the masses leveled against reformist labor leaders. Talk of revolution was completely absent, although the Comintern moved a step forward by labeling such an economic fight as political, a class struggle.

Character of the Strike

It is not within the scope of this article to go into a detailed history of British labor's May action. However, in order to appraise non-British opinion, we must discover just what was the true nature of the strike. A wide range of British interpretation has to be taken into account. Let us turn first to the actions of the General Council of the TUC which called the move.

On April 30, the Council issued its "Instructions to Trade Unions."[11] The following industries affiliated with the Council were to cease work: all transport; printing trades; iron and steel; metal and heavy chemicals; and the building trade (except housing and hospital work). Electricity and gas were to cooperate, looking toward cessation of work. Sanitary services continued. Milk and food for the whole population were to be assured, and services to hospitals, clinics, maternity homes, or-

[9] Borkenau, *op.cit.*, pp. 278-79. [10] *Ibid.*, p. 275.
[11] W. Milne-Bailey, *Trade Union Documents*, London, 1929, pp. 342-43.

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phanages, etc., were to continue. Thus, cessation of work was only partial, and many exceptions were made. The nation stood in little danger of being totally paralyzed.

Hamilton Fyfe, editor of labor's newspaper, the *Daily Herald*, and later editor of the General Council's strike bulletin, the *British Worker*, published from May 5 to May 17, wrote on the Special Trade Union Congress which voted for the strike: "There was no boasting, no disposition to think of a general strike as anything but a very regrettable necessity. As for its being a prelude to revolution, any one who suggested that would have been treated as a tiresome fool. . . ."[12] J. H. Thomas, chief spokesman of the General Council at the negotiations with the government, stated at the Congress: " 'I have never in my life,' he said, and his voice was almost a sob, 'begged and pleaded for peace, and have pleaded and begged to-day [April 30].' "[13]

All observers agreed on the remarkable strike-solidarity of the approximately three million men who went "out." However, a left-wing writer, Allen Hutt, declared that "from the start a whole gulf was cleaved between the attitude and aims of the strike leaders and of the millions of strikers themselves,"[14] since the "Councils of Action" (local trade union strike committees set up to run the strike) represented "elements of a Dual Government, Labor versus State."[15] Some of the local councils in the provinces did go so far as to issue transport permits, and assumed growing control of their areas in the days that followed. There is adequate evidence to prove that Communists gained control of a few councils.[16] But there is no evidence to indicate that even these councils called for revolution—the seizure of state power. Overwhelmingly, their actions were concerned only with facilitating the strike, making it more effective, not with the assumption of governmental powers. The fact that there were relatively few acts of violence, and that

[12] Hamilton Fyfe, *Behind the Scenes of the Great Strike*, London, 1926, p. 10.
[13] *Ibid.*
[14] *The Post-War History of the British Working Class*, New York, 1938, p. 111.
[15] *Ibid.*, p. 112.
[16] *Ibid.*, p. 125; R. W. Postgate, Ellen G. Wilkinson, and J. F. Horrabin, *A Workers' History of the Great Strike*, London, 1927, p. 48; R. Page Arnot, *The General Strike, May 1926: Its Origin and History*, London, 1926, p. 192.

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those were dominated by a make-the-strike-100% theme, gives no credence to Hutt's revolutionary claims.

Two key documents illustrate unequivocally the position of the leaders of the strike. On May 5 the *British Worker* printed on its front-page the following "Message to All Workers":

> The General Council of the Trades Union Congress wishes to emphasize the fact that this is an industrial dispute. We expect every member taking part to be exemplary in his conduct and not to give any opportunity for police interference. The outbreak of any disturbances would be very damaging to the prospects of a successful termination to the dispute.

This "Message" was repeated in the issues of May 6, 8, 9, and 11. (The strike ended on May 12.)

The second key statement appeared on May 7 on the same newspaper's front-page:

> The General Council does not challenge the Constitution.
> It is not seeking to substitute unconstitutional government.
> Nor is it desirous of undermining our Parliamentary institutions.
> The sole aim of the Council is to secure for the miners a decent standard of life.
> The Council is engaged in an Industrial dispute.
> There is no Constitutional crisis.

The absence of the words "strike" and "strikers" in these important statements is a further indication of the attempt to play down and minimize the whole event. The *British Worker* severely toned down all reports of violence, and emphasized again and again the peaceful nature of the strike.

The position of the men who led and controlled the strike appears clear. They never wanted it. It was forced upon them by their solemn pledge to support the miners. The British labor movement assumed that any reduction in the standard of living of the miners would ultimately cause a similar reduction for all workers. The great mass of the strikers followed their leaders without question. The General Council and the men it led never dreamed of attacking the British state. Any charge of revolution was completely absurd. The Council certainly feared to some degree that the strike might get out of hand. They were frightened men. They could not wait until the mischievous genie was securely corked back in his bottle.

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The government rallied its forces to meet what it considered was a "threat" to its existence. A state of emergency had been proclaimed on April 30. The Organization for the Maintenance of Supplies (OMS), the government's strike-breaking arm in formation since the summer crisis of 1925, grew rapidly. Students from Cambridge and Oxford turned out en masse as strike-breakers, mainly in transport. Elements of the army, navy, and air force were alerted, and put on active duty in battle array. Thousands of Special Constables and a Civil Constabulary Reserve were recruited.

On May 3 in the House, Prime Minister Baldwin declared: "It is not wages that are imperilled: it is the freedom of our very constitution. . . . I do not think all the leaders when they assented to ordering a general strike fully realized that they were threatening the basis of ordered government, and going nearer to proclaiming civil war than we have been for centuries past."[17] And Chancellor of the Exchequer Churchill declared on the same day: "It is a conflict which, if it is fought out to a conclusion, can only end in the overthrow of Parliamentary Government or in its decisive victory."[18]

The Conservative press joined the attack. The *Daily Mail* on May 7 wrote: ". . . the revolutionaries who are behind this war on the country must be taught that their plans are vain. And that England is not going to succumb as did the inert and characterless Russian people (when these were betrayed by their constitutional Ministry under Kerensky [sic]) but will meet and defeat such attacks as this."

To present its case to the nation the British government published the *British Gazette* from May 5 to May 13. The government took full responsibility for the material contained in the paper, with the cost of its publication borne by the Treasury Vote.[19] Thus, the *British Gazette* came under the direct supervision of Churchill. Immediately, the paper whipped up a revolutionary frenzy: "A Challenge to Ordered Government"; "Hold-up of the Nation"; "The Constitution or a Soviet."[20]

[17] *Parliamentary Debates: House of Commons*, 5th series, CXCV (May 3 to May 14, 1926), pp. 71, 72.
[18] *Ibid.*, p. 124. [19] *Ibid.*, pp. 277-78. [20] *British Gazette*, May 5, 1926, p. 1.

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Much more coverage was given to acts of violence than in the *British Worker*, but it was generally admitted that no *serious* disorders had broken out.

Soviet and Comintern Reactions

The May 5 issue of *Izvestiya* splashed a six-column, black-type, lead headline across its front-page: "Class Against Class in England." It was not until the next day that *Pravda* echoed this theme. *Izvestiya* correctly paraphrased Baldwin's declaration in the House on May 3. Shades of violence were pointed up by the honest headlines: "State of Emergency Proclaimed in England"; "Government-mobilized Strike-breakers, the Army and the Fleet"; "Most Important Industrial Centers Paralyzed." However, "Panic in the Stock-Exchange" seems exaggerated. Basing its information on the declarations of the British government, *Izvestiya* announced: "The Strike Takes on a Political Character." Then followed a long list of the unions participating in the strike and their numbers. Declarations of the Comintern and Profintern were printed in *Pravda*.

Next to actual news of the strike itself, the theme of international labor support of the strike received the biggest play. *Izvestiya* published messages of sympathy and material aid sent from trade unions all over the world to the British General Council. A prominent feature entitled "Workers of the U.S.S.R. and the Events in England" told of enthusiastic meetings of trade union and Party organs in Minsk, Tiflis, Baku, Omsk, Tomsk, and Kharkov. *Pravda*'s feature titled "Solidarity of the International Proletariat" detailed the decision of the Executive Committee of the International Transport Union in Berlin to prevent shipments of coal to England, and the meetings of workers in Paris in support of the strike.[21] Dispatches reported special meetings of various Soviet bodies which donated or promised financial aid.[22] Both papers correctly reported the clashes between strikers and strike-breakers, but the fact that the great bulk of the strikers stayed at home or on the picket lines or just milled about the streets passed without notice. Such news items

[21] *Pravda*, May 5, p. 3. [22] *Ibid.*

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as those headed "Discontent Begins in the Army" and "Soldiers Refuse to Move Against the Workers" did not report specific incidents or places, but spoke in broad terms.[23] No other source verified these hints at mutiny. The scope and strength of strikers' "Organizations of Self-Defense" were exaggerated, although such bodies did spring up.

Workers' meetings of solidarity were not the only activity of Soviet trade unions reported in the press. On May 5 the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions (AUCC) decided "to call on all members of the Trade Unions of the U.S.S.R. to strike off one-quarter of a day's wages, for aid to the striking workers of England."[24] The Central Council immediately transferred 250,000 rubles ($125,000) from its own resources to the British General Council. A seven-man commission was appointed to organize the collection of subscriptions and to determine additional measures of aid. On May 7 the AUCC transferred two million rubles (one million dollars) to the British Council. On the same day, an open letter to the English workers signed by Tomsky (President), Dogadov (Secretary), and the remaining twenty-three members of the Central Committee of the AUCC appeared in *Izvestiya*. It began, "Dear Comrades." The English proletariat were viewed as united and "turned to the defense of their economic and political conquests." It continued, "The working class leans on the whole might of the state apparatus, the police and the army. The workers of other countries can support the workers of England, their class brothers."

On May 8, the *British Worker* announced the decision of the General Council to refuse money from the Soviet trade unions. (Other foreign money also was refused during the strike.) Already squirming uneasily under their "revolutionary" tag, the leaders of the strike must have been horror-struck at the thought of being accused of accepting "red gold." This news appeared in *Izvestiya* on May 11 alongside a reply from the AUCC. The Soviet trade union decree stated that the AUCC had been prompted in its actions by two considerations: "class solidarity,"

[23] *Pravda*, May 6, p. 2.
[24] *Izvestiya*, May 6, p. 2.

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and the "treaty of a united front of the Anglo-Soviet Committee of Unity."[25] The AUCC did not want to discuss the General Council's refusal to accept the money, or its motives, but accepted the returned check. However, collections on behalf of the English miners were to continue.

Both Soviet papers continued their wide coverage of the strike. The magnitude of disorders continued to be inflated out of its true proportion. Dispatches from all over the world reported the solidarity of elements of the working-classes of the world with the strikers. Vladimir Mayakovsky and Dem'yan Bednyi penned poems on the strike.[26] The role of the General Council as the organizing center of the strike and its publication, the *British Worker*, were mentioned, but basic policies were not discussed. On May 11 *Pravda* reproduced the front page of the *British Worker* of May 5. For the Soviet citizen who could read English, the "Message to All Workers," flatly calling the strike industrial and counseling against violence, could have been most instructive. *Izvestiya* on May 9, the sixth day of the strike, contained the first open hint of the true attitudes of the General Council. In a long dispatch titled "Perilous Position of the General Council," the Soviet newspaper admitted that some members of the Council were "willing to negotiate" and "consider that conversations can be resumed on the basis of abolishing the General Strike and lock-out. . . ."

Both papers used the Russian phrase *sovety deistviya* in quotation marks to describe the local "Councils of Action." There

[25] This committee, at times referred to as the Anglo-Russian Trade Union Unity Committee, or the Anglo-Russian Committee of Trade Unions, was born out of a long-raging dispute between the Amsterdam International of Trade Unions, and one of its affiliates, the British TUC. The controversy concerned the question of joining with the Soviet trade unions in a united front of world labor. Amsterdam opposed the idea; the British favored it. A British resolution to this effect was defeated at a congress of the Amsterdam International. Therefore, the British TUC alone approached the Soviet trade unions with a proposal for unity. The result was the establishment in April 1925 of this committee. It consisted of the chairman and secretaries of the TUC and the Soviet AUCC respectively, plus three members of each side. Its avowed purpose was to promote cooperation between the two bodies, to facilitate the free exchange of documents dealing with their structure, machinery, organization, and policy, and to develop the closest mutual aid. The Committee met periodically, but did not convene during the General Strike. It does not seem to have had any real binding power on either party. In the main, it was concerned with discussions on broad issues.

[26] *Izvestiya*, May 8, p. 2; *Pravda*, May 7, p. 1, and May 9, p. 1.

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was nothing resembling hints of "revolutionary" activity or of another "government" which would parallel the role of the soviets in the Russian revolutionary movement. On May 11 *Pravda* began a new feature under the heading, "We Are Always with You and Help in the Struggle to the End; The Voice of the Proletariat of the U.S.S.R." These columns were filled with reports of meetings in individual factories and Komsomol cells, pledging moral and material support to the strikers. It drove home the theme that "Victory of the English workers is the victory of the workers of all the world."[27]

The May 13 issues of *Pravda* and *Izvestiya* broke the news of the "liquidation" of the General Strike. Coverage shrank considerably. The miners continued to strike (as they did until their defeat in November), readers were informed. Short dispatches explained the provisions of the "Samuel Memorandum," on the basis of which the strike was called off, and castigated the General Council for "treacherously" breaking with the miners.

To sum up, purely from a news-coverage point of view, both newspapers reported fully on every phase of the General Strike. The issues published during the strike devoted the entire first two pages and part of the third to it. This extent of coverage indicates the importance which Soviet writers attached to mass labor action in Great Britain. The question of emphasis is another matter. Both papers played up acts of violence out of proportion to their real importance. However, news-wise the strike was not treated at all as a civil war or revolution. It was regarded as a class struggle, with deep and growing political significance. The large-scale military acts of the British government received honest treatment. Both papers fell down sharply in an objective presentation of the aims and methods of the strike-leaders and the strikers. The General Council was accurately placed at the head of the strike, but its policies as enunciated clearly in the *British Worker* were almost completely ignored. Acts of international solidarity from some workers' groups were inflated in importance, considering the numbers participating and the scope of their aid. An attempt was made to instill in the reader the impression that all the workers of

[27] *Pravda*, May 12, p. 3.

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the world were rising to back their British brothers. The enthusiasm and magnitude of the solidarity of Soviet workers behind the strike were genuine, and have received verification from other sources.[28]

EDITORIAL COMMENT

Izvestiya's editorial of May 5 bore the title, "Class Struggle in England." This was one of the key phrases of all Soviet interpretation. The long article was taken up almost exclusively with a thorough discussion of the coal question in England, and the Report of the Samuel Commission. The analysis was factual and accurate, indicating a thorough knowledge of the subject on the part of the writer. In summing up, the author declared that this great historic event ". . . can be a turning point in the history of the international struggle of the working class."

The next editorial brought in another fundamental theme of Soviet thinking on the strike: "The strike of the English miners began as a purely economic one. . . . But already such great forces have been drawn into the class struggle and so much strength has gradually become involved in it that it is possible to declare boldly that the English General Strike has, in the initial stage, all the peculiarities of a political struggle."[29] On May 7 *Izvestiya* drew an accurate, detailed picture of the mass forces of suppression that the British government had mobilized on its side. The Workers' Defense Corps were exaggerated in importance, although it was admitted that they were still in the formative stage.

Another main theme of Soviet analysis was introduced with the editorial, "For a United Front."[30] The core of this thesis was expressed in the following words: "The great struggle of the English working class represents a new step in the creation of a united front of the world proletariat." The May 9 editorial sounded a warning: "Dangerous Position of the General Council." The rank and file of the workers were warned against the possible "treachery" of their leaders.

[28] W. P. and Z. K. Coates, *A History of Anglo-Soviet Relations*, London, 1943, p. 229.
[29] *Izvestiya*, May 6, p. 1.
[30] *Ibid.*, May 8, p. 1.

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Summing up in an editorial entitled "A Week," the May 11 number observed: "The first week was a week of the growth and organization of the workers' strike power and the appearance of feelings of solidarity from the whole international proletariat."

Two political cartoons illustrated editorial opinion fairly well. The caption on May 12 read, "Heads and leaders of the striking proletariat are found as before in loyal (to the King and Baldwin) hands." It showed three midget "leaders," MacDonald, Henderson, and Thomas, standing on the huge figure of a British worker and tying him up with rope. The last cartoon on May 14 can be regarded as the most dramatic. The title was a quote from an article signed by the ECCI: " 'To be at the head, in order to Behead!' Such is the principle of Mr. Thomas." MacDonald, Henderson, and Thomas, attired in court dress and making a low bow, were presenting a large platter at the King's foot, which was resting on a stool. On the platter was a huge head labeled "General Strike." The caption read: "MacDonald, Thomas, and Henderson with a report for His Majesty."

In *Pravda*, the first long editorial of May 5 declared that the strike had begun on the "quiet scale of a conflict between capital and labor." "A grand test of class powers has resulted which—whatever the outcome—is destined to leave a permanent mark on the history of the struggle of the British proletariat." After a full discussion of the coal question and the recommendations of the Samuel Commission, the writer commented on how the "whole state" had been mobilized against the workers. The strikers were warned against "the slightest wavering of those leaders who in the past did not know how to defend the interests of the proletariat." "Such already is the logic of the class struggle . . . that, having been in the beginning a 'purely' economic struggle, it is shifted for the future to political rails. A gradual transformation of the economic trade union struggle into a political one cannot be avoided in England in the event of a further broadening of the conflict. The battle has only just begun. . . . Behind them [the striking British workers], watching with ill-concealed delight, stand the revolutionary proletariat of all other countries, with the proletariat of the U.S.S.R. in the front rank. The first duty of the international proletariat is the

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rendering of every kind of aid to the striking English workers. . . . The task of the British proletariat in truth is the task of the proletariat of the whole world." The May 7 editorial expanded its warning of May 5: "Behind the backs of the fighting proletariat, and even behind the back of the General Council, treachery is being prepared." "It cannot be denied that the class struggle in England already displays all the more marked tendencies of becoming a political struggle. This, possibly, the fighting masses and their leaders do not yet realize." But Baldwin's government had hurled political provocations at the workers, and really understood the political character of the strike. The English proletariat, therefore, "will have to strive for the organization of a workers' government of England. Such already is the iron logic of the struggle, which cannot be avoided."

The May 11 editorial prodded the General Council: "The strike can be carried to victory only if the leaders are not afraid of politics . . . if they will face the question of power daringly." The obvious implication here is that the leaders were actually afraid of politics and power. In this roundabout manner, Soviet writers hinted at the true nature of the aims and methods of the strike leaders, without mentioning them specifically.

"From Defense to Offense" foreshadowed the end of the strike.[31] Three periods were observed. The first had come at the very moment of the announcement of the strike. Those days of "class collision" and "thickening of the political atmosphere" reminded the writer of "August 1914." The second period had begun when the government started moving the army. At that moment the General Council should have "turned openly" to the army, instead of delaying and wavering. Its tactic was "dangerous and ruinous . . . at that moment of sharp class conflict." "The English strike is of course still not a rebellion. But it obeys the same laws as a class struggle." The third period was approaching. The government and the General Council were soothing the workers with talk of peace. "And this is the greatest danger which faces the English strike movement. The strike can continue for a few more days, maybe even a week, but it will be without impulse, without perspective, if the working masses,

[31] *Izvestiya*, May 12, p. 1.

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following the appeals of the Communist Party of England, do not go over the heads of the legal leaders." Again and again, the same theme was repeated: The leaders and the masses did not want the same thing; they were separate, distinct entities.

Pravda featured eight political cartoons. In five of them (May 6, 7, 8, 9, and 11) MacDonald was shown kissing the feet of either a British capitalist or the King. A large cartoon on May 7 portrayed a giant, brawny worker, stripped to the waist, with his fellow-workers behind him, facing a mob of smaller people carrying clubs labeled "O.M.S." Representatives of the government, police, Church, and army were visible.

The cartoon in the May 13 issue was by far the most provoking. It was entitled "Servants of the Bourgeoisie at Traitorous Work." In it, on a hill to one side, stand Baldwin, Churchill, the King, and some other figures, holding the end of a lasso. Henderson also stands on the hill using a telescope. On the other side, off the hill, are MacDonald and Snowden inside the loop of the lasso, haranguing a crowd of workers. The caption finds the "Government" asking Henderson: "Well, what's happening? Are they going into the loop?" Henderson, looking through his telescope, says: "Not yet. But ours, both Snowden and MacDonald, are calling like anything." Here in a nutshell was the entire theme of the "treacherous" leaders working with the government, trying to dupe the workers and betray them to the "enemy."

Thus, both papers agreed that the strike was a class-political struggle led by reformists. *Pravda* took a more radical position and called on the British workers to disregard their leaders and form their own government. The editorial writers knew the facts, but gave them a Marxist interpretation. They hoped the strike would develop into a struggle for state power, but were aware of its limited aims, although they did not emphasize them.

When the strike began, *Inprecorr* inaugurated a new feature entitled "Declarations of Solidarity with the English Miners,"[32] which chronicled international moral and material support. On May 5 the ECCI addressed a manifesto to "Workers of All Coun-

[32] *Inprecorr*, VI, No. 39 (May 6, 1926), p. 598.

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tries!"[33] The British capitalists were attacking the vanguard of the British proletariat, the miners. "The great contest between Capital and Labour in Great Britain began as an *economic* struggle, but is *developing into a political one.*" A united front of the proletariat of the world had to be formed, since "The fight of the *British* proletariat is a fight of the proletariat of the *whole* world." No coal or petroleum should be allowed to reach England. "All sections of the Communist International will invite the Social Democrats in all countries to join without delay in forming a committee for united action which is to undertake to support the fight of the British workers in every way." The strikers were warned against the treachery of their leaders.

Zinov'ev, leading figure in the Comintern, published his observations, "The Significance of the General Strike in Great Britain," on May 5.[34] His position was a Left one. "No power in the world can now arrest the rapid Bolshevisation of the vanguard of the British proletariat, the revolutionising of the British proletariat, the strengthening of communist ideas among the British proletariat." Otherwise, the article was concerned with repeating, with some vehemence, the policies previously enunciated by the ECCI.

On May 8 the Comintern and the Profintern once again officially called for a united front.[35] International Communism devoted all its energies to harnessing the forces of world labor behind the strike. The RILU, like the Soviet trade unions, also decreed a levy of one-quarter of a day's wages.

Zinov'ev and Radek published one article apiece in the Soviet press during the course of the strike. Zinov'ev's "Great Events in England"[36] repeated the theses of the ECCI manifesto and his *Inprecorr* article. Karl Radek's article appeared in *Pravda.* It was called "Social Crisis in England."[37] After long quotations from the Coal Commission Report, the article declared that although "the coal strike alone is a great economic blow," the strike of other industries "means the further growth of the economic crisis into a social one." As for the leaders, Radek remarked that "the strike is led by reformists, not by Commu-

[33] *Ibid.*, No. 41 (May 13, 1926), pp. 653-54. [34] *Ibid.*, p. 657.
[35] *Ibid.*, p. 660. [36] *Izvestiya*, May 5, p. 2. [37] *Pravda*, May 5, p. 2.

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nists." And he added significantly: "Already, this is the answer to the wails of Baldwin and the whole English bourgeoisie concerning the revolutionary intentions of the leaders of the trade-unions and concerning the struggle aimed against the democratic constitution. The leaders of the trade-unions not only are not thinking about such a revolution, but fear that most of all in the world." However, "The whole depth of the crisis which England is experiencing is expressed in the fact that these mortal enemies of every revolutionary idea have to announce a general strike, have to proclaim one of the greatest world social collisions. The working masses compel them to do this." Then came repetition of the theme that the miners, in defending their own interests, were at the same time defending "the interests of the whole English proletariat and the workers of all other capitalistic countries." "The chief danger" was that the majority of the General Council who undertook the strike ". . . will try at the first convenient chance . . . to go to the aid of the bourgeoisie."

During the strike, the Communist Party of Great Britain published a daily *Workers Bulletin* and local mimeographed sheets.[38] On May 4 the *Bulletin* announced: "Congratulations to the workers of Great Britain! Nothing finer has ever been seen than the completeness of their response to the call of the General Council."[39] On May 5, the Party called for "Nationalization of the mines without compensation for the coal-owners; under workers' control through pit committees." The third slogan called for "Resignation of the forgery government—formation of a Labour Government."[40] The workers were told to organize their own "Workers' Defense Corps against O.M.S. and Fascisti."[41] On May 8, the Party urged the General Council to form a new Labour government.[42]

Lessons of the General Strike

SOVIET COMMENTS

On May 13, *Izvestiya* carried the news of the end of the strike. The editorial declared that, unfortunately, "The media-

[38] Tom Bell, *The British Communist Party: A Short History*, London, 1937, p. 114.
[39] Arnot, *op.cit.*, p. 175, as quoted. [40] *Ibid.*, p. 180.
[41] *Ibid.* [42] *Ibid.*, p. 200.

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tion efforts of Thomas, MacDonald, and Henderson are crowned with sad success." "In a formal way the bourgeoisie obtained its goal: the General Strike is broken precisely at that moment when the organization, activity, firmness, and selflessness of the masses transformed it [the Strike] to a higher phase of development, enlarging by these very things its chances for victory. . . . Clearly, the movement grew over the head of this group [the General Council], which only formally is its leadership." These leaders "will be tossed aside." "The preparation and election of leaders, worthy of the trust of the proletariat, is the task, furnished by the latest events, before the working class of the whole capitalist world."

The editorial in *Pravda* announced: "The leaders of the strike themselves were afraid of the scope of the movement, they strangled it, directed it into an innocent channel, and when they noticed that the spark of class struggle began to flame—they decided to finish with it."[43]

Zinov'ev's analysis of the cessation of the strike was called " 'Economics and Politics' in the English Strike."[44] With marked optimism, he believed that the "treacherous" leaders had unwittingly furthered the Bolshevist cause in England. "What is the present English strike—an economic or political strike? A defensive or offensive strike? To answer these questions according to the principle 'yes or no' is not so easy. We have to look at the living dialectic of the grandiose struggle developing before our eyes. We have especially to examine the whole panorama and get rid of empty words, phrases, the appearance of facts." He then gave a long and accurate history of the strike. The announced policies of the General Council were quoted in full. It was emphasized that the leaders of the strike were not mounting an attack on the constitution; they did not want a revolution; they declared the strike an industrial one. But, according to Lenin, each class struggle is a political struggle, Zinov'ev declared. "And the *masses* realized more and more that the real question was the structure of the state power."[45] "As the English strike advances to the stage of the Russian strike of the spring

[43] *Pravda*, May 13, p. 1. [44] *Izvestiya*, May 13, p. 3.
[45] Italics added.

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and summer of 1917, the official leaders of the English labor movement, not wishing themselves to play this role, are still, objectively speaking, playing an episodic role of 'half-Bolshevik.' " As a result, the true Bolsheviks in England would be strengthened. "The present movement loosens the ground for the rapid, perhaps violent and lasting, growth of Bolshevism in the English labor movement." Here Zinov'ev used Russian experience to interpret events in a foreign country.

Radek also believed that the cautious labor leaders had been thoroughly discredited, and he was optimistic about the strike's future effects.[46] "The fight of the English proletariat was our fight, the fight of the proletariat of the whole world. Its defeat is our defeat . . . the result of the greatest treachery in the world . . . [which] will end with the birth of a mass Communist Party in England." "These eight days of the strike were historic days. They enter into the history of the English revolutionary movement as its greatest days . . . [and] will give it the greatest revolutionary impulse. They will mean in the history of the English working class more than ten years of agitation."

On June 8, less than a month after the end of the strike, Stalin delivered a speech in Tiflis to a meeting of workers employed in railway workshops.[47] His analysis stands out as the most frank and realistic of all Communist interpretations. In fact, he underestimated British labor's action. Basing his ideas on a Marxist appraisal of the factual situation, Stalin agreed with the other commentators that the labor leaders had "treacherously" deceived the workers, and would eventually be replaced by more radical men. However, in contrast to Radek, Zinov'ev, and the editorial writers, Stalin believed that the strike had neither taken a political path nor aroused a united world proletariat against world capital. And, furthermore, he declared that the British workers even after the strike did not realize the need to seize state power in order to become masters of their fate.

[46] "The Tragedy of the Masses and the Farce of the Legal Leaders," *Pravda*, May 13, p. 1.

[47] I. V. Stalin, "Ob Angliiskoi Zabastovke i Sobytiyakh v Pol'she" ["Concerning the English Strike and Events in Poland"], *Sochineniya* [*Works*], VIII, Moscow, 1948, pp. 155-72.

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First, Stalin traced in some detail the underlying reasons for the event. England was losing the postwar scramble to regain international markets because of her second-rate technology. In this brutally competitive process, English capitalism was forced to lower production costs "at the expense of the working class." Quite accurately, Stalin described how the Conservative Party in England prepared for the strike for almost a year by collecting supplies of coal, organizing strikebreakers, and "working up public opinion."[48]

Without recounting the history of the strike, Stalin went ahead to the problem, "Why Did the General Strike Fail in England?" "The leaders of the working class did not prove up to the tasks of the working class." Furthermore, "the leaders of the General Council proved to be either direct traitors to the coal miners and the working class of England in general (Thomas, Henderson, MacDonald, and others) or weak-willed fellow-travelers of these traitors who dreaded the struggle and, still more, a victory of the working class (Purcell, Hicks, and others)." "Surely, in time they will be forced to give way to new leaders, who correspond to the fighting spirit and heroism of the English proletariat. Engels was right in calling such leaders 'bourgeoisified' leaders of the working class." This great strike could have won success only if it had been transferred to "political paths," and had at the same time become "an act of battle of the proletariat of all progressive countries against capital. The English General Council disclaimed both these conditions, predetermining the downfall of the general strike."[49]

"The weakness of the Communist Party of England also played an important role in the failure of the strike. Its position during the strike was correct. But its authority among the English workers is still quite weak. It could not take a leading role in the course of the general strike."[50]

Stalin concluded with "The Lessons of the General Strike." Most important, "the English workers do not realize that the political power of the capitalists, the Conservative Party, is the main obstacle to their aims. Neither the coal crisis nor the

[48] *Ibid.*, pp. 156, 158, 159.
[49] *Ibid.*, pp. 160-61, 163.
[50] *Ibid.*, pp. 163-64.

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industrial crisis throughout England can be solved until the working class realizes that it must battle organized capital for political power as well as economic power. . . . I think that an understanding of this truth will be for the working class of England its biggest conquest." Likewise, the workers "are not able to understand that it is necessary to replace the old leaders with new revolutionary leaders."[51]

Stalin's address concluded with some remarks concerning the stabilization of capitalism. "The strike showed that the decision of the Communist International on the temporary and unstable character of the stabilization is entirely correct. The attack of English capital is an attempt to turn temporary, unstable stabilization into a lasting and constant stabilization. This is not successful . . . stabilization in the postwar world is impossible." Therefore, "stabilization is ended. We are entering a period of a higher rise in revolutionary storms. But temporary unstable stabilization will remain for the present."[52] The result would be wholesale attacks by world capital on world labor.

Writing on May 6, Trotsky sounded an optimistic note: "The strike has made the substitution of a proletarian state for the bourgeois one a question of the day. If the strike itself does not bring about this change, it will at least greatly hasten its approach, though in what period of time we cannot, of course, say. We should, however, be prepared for the possibility of a near date."[53]

ANALYSES BY ZINOV'EV AND THE COMINTERN

On May 21, Zinov'ev let loose a strong leftist tirade on the strike, filled with boundless optimism for the revolutionary growth of the British proletariat.[54] First, the true attitudes of the leaders were adequately explained: "The General Council did not want the General Strike, they wanted compromise." The Council and the leaders of the Labour Party were "horrified at the fight." The British workers had been defeated. However, "the victory of the English bourgeoisie is a Pyrrhic victory. A

[51] *Ibid.*, pp. 164-65. [52] *Ibid.*, p. 166.
[53] *Inprecorr*, VI, No. 46 (June 10, 1926), p. 746.
[54] *Ibid.*, No. 47 (June 17, 1926), pp. 761-64; No. 48 (June 24, 1926), pp. 789-90.

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few more such strikes, and the English bourgeoisie will breathe its last." As for the future: "The labor movement in England is at present in process of becoming more and more proletarian, more and more revolutionary. . . . There can be no doubt that the young, but very energetic and very active, British Communist Party . . . will grow." "The English working class is a whole head taller than it was. The 'leaders' have lost their heads, if indeed they ever had any. They are done with, they are dead men . . . the English working class has created its own power . . . and will shake off these gentlemen with a single shrug of its shoulders. . . . the revolutionary impetus of the English working class . . . will grow more than ever after this strike."

Zinov'ev believed that "during the strike, there were elements of double government in England." This must have stirred Zinov'ev's audience to draw comparisons with the Dual Government period in Russia, February-October, 1917. In reaffirming the validity of the general-strike weapon, the head of the Comintern declared: "The English working class has shown that it is possible to make use of so powerful a weapon as the general strike in a situation which cannot be called directly revolutionary."

On June 17, *Inprecorr* published the basic interpretative document of the ECCI on the strike, "Theses on the Lessons of the British General Strike."[55] It was admitted that the labor leaders never wanted the strike. "As a matter of fact, the strike developed not thanks to the leaders, but against their will. . . . The strike was liquidated because it was growing, for its leaders feared this very growth more than anything else." The alleged split between leaders and workers would "inevitably" lead both to "a definite Rightward process on the part of the upper groups of leaders (both in the trade unions and in the Labour Party) and to the process of further revolutionizing of the masses." Therefore, the CPGB must be ready to transform the workers' resistance "into a wide revolutionary offensive movement of the proletariat." However, the ECCI acknowledged that, during the period of the strike itself, there had not yet been "a revolution-

[55] VI, No. 47 (June 17, 1926), pp. 765-72.

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ary situation in the narrow sense of the word," and that the CPGB was "still young and numerically weak."[56]

Fourteen "Lessons of the Strike" were enumerated, many of which have been previously discussed. The United Front tactic of the Comintern and Profintern was extolled. The Soviet trade unions should not pull out of the Anglo-Russian Trade Union Unity Committee, but strengthen it in order to maintain connections with the masses. The struggle for international trade union unity should continue. The main task of all Communists was "to win the masses."[57] The CPGB must now transform the Party into a "Mass Party of the Communist Workers of Great Britain, while continuing its agitation in the trade unions." The revolutionary program of the CPGB must be energetically brought forward.

"The Immediate Tasks of the British Communist Party" repeated much that has already been said, and added support of the miners; the organization of anti-strikebreaking corps and workers' defense corps; exposure of the present leaders of British labor as "traitors"; the election of new leaders from the ranks; preparations for future struggles; and "propagation of the slogan concerning power—Down with Baldwin, defender of the capitalists, Long live the real workers' government."[58]

"The Tasks of the Comintern and Its Sections" were defined in much the same terms, with this conclusion: "A definite revolutionary situation does not yet exist. British events have lent emphasis to the perspective of a revolutionary *élan*. Communist Parties must do their utmost in the struggle for the realization of this actual perspective, and it is from this world point of view that the Communist international has to perform its duty toward the struggling British proletarians. United front tactics, the capture of the masses—as the main task—remain, as before, the foundation of the tactics of the Communist International."[59]

When the strike collapsed, the Communist Party of Great Britain urged on May 13 in the *Workers Bulletin* that the Councils of Action re-form and convene local conferences. Then a national conference should be called "which alone can produce

[56] *Ibid.*, pp. 766, 767, 768. [57] *Ibid.*, p. 770. [58] *Ibid.*, p. 771.
[59] *Ibid.*, p. 772.

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a new leadership in keeping with the requirements of the struggle and save the Trade Unions from disaster. Stick to the Trade Unions. Reform the ranks and stand firm!"[60] Loyalty to the miners was to be maintained. A Communist writer, "C.B.," declared: "It is true that the strike was not inaugurated to overthrow the Constitution . . . and to inaugurate a regime of Workers' Councils. Nothing was further from the minds of the majority of the strikers than that. The strikers were out to fight against wage reductions. . . ."[61] In conclusion, "the failure of the strike was, therefore, a failure of the leadership, in the widest sense of the word."[62] A new leadership had to be developed for the labor movement. "Fortunately the nucleus of such a leadership already exists in the CPGB." In the future, all Party members would participate in all the day-to-day work of the labor movement, but "will propagate the same revolutionary policy wherever they find themselves." In this way, the workers would be prepared "for the mass struggle for power."[63]

Thus, no Soviet or Comintern writers equated the General Strike with an attempt to transfer power to the trade unions. Only the British government and the forces of conservatism, led by Churchill and his *British Gazette*, cried revolution. For Soviet and Comintern leaders, the failure of the strike was far from being contrary to expectations or equivalent to a bombshell. They were thoroughly acquainted with the aims and methods of the leaders of the General Council. They had all the facts, even though they did not like most of them. All Soviet and Comintern writings hinted often and broadly at a possible breaking-off of the strike. They called it "treachery" of the leaders. Borkenau's contention that Moscow did not speak of socialist betrayal must fall before the unanimous hue and cry raised against reformism and its leaders.

The position furthest to the left was taken by Zinov'ev, with Radek and Trotsky close behind. Neither Zinov'ev nor the Comintern called the strike a revolution. Their interpretations boiled down to the statement that the strike had "loosened"

[60] Arnot, *op.cit.*, p. 200, as quoted.

[61] "C. B.," *The Reds and the General Strike*, London, 1926, p. 12. "Published by the CPGB."

[62] *Ibid.*, p. 30.

[63] *Ibid.*, pp. 35, 36.

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the ground for revolution. Zinov'ev's faith in the "Bolshevisation" and "revolutionising" of the British proletariat as a result of the strike hardly accorded with the facts. The strike probably increased the class consciousness of British labor, but it did not even smell of revolution.

On balance, Stalin's views were probably closer to the truth, if they were not too pessimistic. He believed that the strike had not even convinced the British worker that he must organize his own state to gain economic power. To Stalin, the strike was hardly a step forward. In actual fact, it was not as empty an experience for the British labor movement as he judged it to be. The unanimous Communist charge that the leaders had betrayed the masses and had to be replaced by new men can be attributed only to the Marxist belief that reformist labor leaders who do not fight to overthrow the bourgeois state and set up a workers' government are traitors. All Soviet and Comintern writers agreed that the strike was at least a class struggle, and some maintained that it was a political struggle as well. The CPGB attempted no independent action, but worked with the unions and tried to expand the strength and scope of labor's big move. It called for a new government, but took no overt step to establish one.

In short, the General Strike was never what many people wanted it to be.

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Review Articles

TOWARD A GENERAL THEORY OF ACTION*

By W. W. ROSTOW

Talcott Parsons and Edward A. Shils, eds., *Toward a General Theory of Action*, with contributions by Edward C. Tolman, Gordon W. Allport, Clyde Kluckhohn, Henry A. Murray, Robert R. Sears, Richard D. Sheldon, and Samuel A. Stouffer, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1951, pp. xii, 506. $7.50.

I

THIS book is a highly professional effort to move toward a unification of concept in the fields of cultural anthropology, sociology, and psychology. The reviewer is an economic historian who, at the limit of generosity, can be described as an interested observer of these fields.

The reviewing procedure raises some difficulties. Although the obscurity of the contributions to the volume varies, it is only with sustained effort that the amateur can come to believe that he has conquered the barrier of private vocabulary which the behavioral scientists have erected, no doubt for good and sufficient reasons. But one trained in modern economics least of all has a right to complain.

The difficulty of communication is compounded by another quality of this book, wholly appropriate to its purpose. It is concerned to unite and generalize the working tools of three distinct—if related—disciplines, each with its own history of achievement, prides, and jealousies. Nuances and associations attach to aspects of the analysis which are bound to be lost on the exploring observer. After all, the abstractions in the behavioral sciences—as in any science—derive from the accumulated judgment of many men as to how particular problems are to be most

* The author is much indebted to Professors Clyde Kluckhohn, Barrington Moore, Jr., Elting E. Morison, and Talcott Parsons, who commented on this review in draft. They bear, of course, no responsibility for its substance.

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usefully described and solved. Although the authors of this volume are modest about the level their sciences have attained, nevertheless, they and their predecessors and contemporaries have, in one fashion or another, met a payroll: they have examined empirically aspects of human behavior. Their attachment to their tools derives from a belief in their usefulness in solving the problems that interest them. The full flavor and meaning of an effort such as this can thus only be absorbed by those who know the flow of studies and the succession of specific human problems which have engaged the practitioners of the behavioral sciences.

Nevertheless, there may be virtue in examining the bare bones of the formal structure the book presents. It is the product of a serious effort, by a distinguished group of scholars, to raise the level of generality of their disciplines and thereby to establish a framework that would put old work in a new light, guide fresh research on to the blackest areas of ignorance, and free students and scholars a little from the usually implicit deformations that arise from the institutionalized specialization of the social sciences. The effort to fulfill these purposes may permit even the ignorant observer some insight into where his neighboring colleagues now stand and what their interim message is to the world outside their disciplines.

II

Toward a General Theory of Action is the product of a special seminar, conducted at Harvard from late September 1949 through January 1950, focused on concepts and methods, developed over many years, by Professor Parsons. The nine scholars whose names are associated with the book met regularly, presented and criticized drafts, and moved toward a consensus. At the same time, a wider and younger group considered the same range of theoretical problems in weekly meetings. With a mild but significant reservation by Professor Kluckhohn, a general statement concerning the fundamental categories for a theory of action was agreed. This statement, along with some (partially dissident) observations on theory in the social sciences by Mr.

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Sheldon, forms Part 1 of the book. Part 2 is a systematic elaboration of the main elements in the categories for a theory of action, written by Professors Parsons and Shils, in collaboration. Part 3 consists of a detailed discussion of the meaning of the general theory of action for psychology by Professor Tolman. Part 4 is made up of five essays which consider certain empirical problems in relation to the general framework of action (Professor Allport on prejudice, Professor Stouffer on role obligation), or pursue in greater detail certain elements in the more general analysis (Professor Kluckhohn on values and value-orientations in the theory of action; Professor Murray on a classification of interaction; and Professor Sears on social behavior and personality development). As befits its title, the volume does not convey the impression of a final formulation, solving conclusively the problems posed. In particular, Part 4 reflects a considerable range of attitudes concerning the usefulness of the structure set out in Parts 1 and 2. Such skepticism is, however, wholly in the spirit of an effort which is, essentially, an interim stock-taking at the highest level of abstraction.

It is evident that scientists choose to work at different points in the spectrum that ranges from pure theory to pure data collection. Their choice reflects complex judgments about the state of their respective fields as well as wholly private questions of taste and talent. Any living field of science requires pure theorists, men working at intermediate levels of abstraction, specialists exploring the conceptual shape of particular bodies of data, and collectors of data within categories created by past theoretical reflection. Professors Parsons and Shils, who spearheaded this effort, are identified in the behavioral sciences with the view that large scientific returns can result at the present time from energy expended in creating concepts which embrace the sprawling areas of specialization and intermediate theorizing that now constitute the behavioral sciences. This judgment about priority is not fully shared by their colleagues. Partly because of that fact, the extent and character of the agreement achieved is worth examination.

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III

Setting aside, for the moment, the important elaborations on Parts 2, 3, and 4, I would restate the framework for a general theory of action somewhat as follows. Men act in relation to their environment so as to maximize their gratification (or minimize their deprivation) by a series of choices among the alternatives they perceive to be open to them. (The authors prefer "optimize" to "maximize.") The complexity of the problem—the central creative insight of the modern behavioral sciences—arises from the fact that man and his environment are not independent variables. It is, indeed, recognized that there are certain primitive drives ("viscerogenic needs") which man has always sought to satisfy. It is also recognized that certain aspects of man's environment are material ("nonsocial"); and some areas of the "nonsocial" environment are given by nature and are unchangeable. Nevertheless, even under the most primitive conception of man's goals ("need-dispositions") and the simplest physical conception of his environment, the manner in which he seeks gratification or avoids deprivation at any moment of time involves choice; and the concepts which determine that choice are, in turn, largely man-made—a product of the prior action of men crystallized into their culture and social system, and built early into the mind, heart, and soul of the individual, or, if you like, into his nervous system. And, if one examines the gratification-deprivation balance in terms of man's relation to other persons and the institutions of society (as opposed to "nonsocial objects"), it is even more clear that action is the product of a complex interplay, in which man cannot be regarded as an actor wholly independent of the society of which he is a part. The manner in which men view the situations they confront and define the available alternatives, the manner in which they come to regard aspects of their environment as either a source of gratification or deprivation, and the manner in which they judge these relationships to be, in a higher sense, good or bad are all, to some extent, determined not by a unique individual but by the interaction of a unique individual and his culture. In effect, the modern behavioral sciences have sought to pierce the veil

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of the old hedonistic calculus, and to clarify the process whereby cultural values and social norms become "internalized," without denying, in the end, that an area of choice remains, stemming from the uniqueness of the individual.

It is from some such view of the human problem that the authors proceed to a frame of reference for a theory of action. At this intermediate intellectual stage, the theory of action is, essentially, a classification of the elements which are present in the choices made by human beings either as individuals or as collective units in the social structure. With some reservations by Professor Kluckhohn and Mr. Sheldon, to which I shall return, action is viewed as undertaken either by personalities or by collective elements in the social system. If one wishes to describe the making of choices by personalities or units of the social system at any moment or short period of time, the scheme suggests the following definitions and frame of reference.

(1) "Actors" are individuals or the social system (or units of the social system), the latter made up of individuals performing collective "roles."

(2) The environment consists of "objects of orientation" classified as "social" (that is, other individual actors and collective units) and "nonsocial."

(3) The process of action requires a definition of the object of orientation ("cognitive mode of orientation"); a judgment (or feeling) as to whether the object of orientation is expected to gratify or deprive ("cathetic mode of orientation"); and an "evaluation," which determines whether that satisfaction or deprivation is to be judged good or bad by the individual or the collectivity. Action reflects the net result of all three of these "modes of orientation," each of which is, in part, culturally determined rather than the product of a pure, rational, individual calculus.

(4) The social system is linked to the individual through the concept of "roles" which define, for a society, the performance expected of the individual (or institution) executing a certain function in the society.

(5) This general theory carries with it notions of equilibrium and of optimization (not clearly distinguished) which I would

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define approximately as follows: (a) an individual is in equilibrium when the three-stage process of orientation to a given range of objects leads him to actions which optimize his gratification (regarding deprivation as negative gratification), including in the process of gratification the balancing among the various roles he is called upon to play in the social system; and (b) a social system is in equilibrium when the roles men are called upon to play are mutually acceptable.

At its crux, it is the concept of complementarity of expectations of performance which is the norm common to the two systems of action examined; that is, the individual personality and the social system. The individual is well adjusted when his perception of his environment and his evaluation of various alternatives converge with his cathectic judgments (or feelings) about gratification. Since his environment embraces other individuals and the social system, this in turn implies that his expectations of gratification conform to what others expect of him in his various roles. A social system is harmonious when the roles which define it, for purposes of a theory of action, correspond to the expectations of the various role-players concerning their respective performances. Given the determinants of action, these optimizing conceptions, in turn, imply widely shared concepts for defining situations, shared expectations of gratification, and shared conceptions of value: in short, a common culture. This is, broadly speaking, the framework which seeks to unify the work of the sociologist and the psychologist.

To this armory of concepts Professors Parsons and Shils add another: the "pattern variables." These do not appear in the agreed General Statement, but figure significantly in Part 2 of the book. The five pattern variables are an effort to define and to relate the dilemmas men and social units confront in action; for, by definition, action is a choice among alternatives, and the three modes of orientation need not lead to action in the same direction. The five choices are designed to be exhaustive, and thus to embrace every conceivable kind of human or social action: (1) the choice between gratification and evaluation, pleasure or duty (affectivity vs. affective neutrality); (2) the choice between a personal view of an object and a view in terms

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of its significance for the society or social unit (self-orientation vs. collectivity-orientation); (3) the choice between an evaluation of the object in terms of its relation to the actor and an evaluation in terms of its relation to the whole social structure, or some lesser entity larger than the actor (universalism vs. particularism); (4) the choice between seeing the object in terms of its performance qualities rather than in terms of some believed inherent qualities (ascription vs. achievement); and (5) the choice between conceding to the object of orientation an undefined but general set of rights and conceding only a clearly specified set of rights (diffuseness vs. specificity).

These pattern variables are both the least satisfactory and most substantive element in the general theory of action at its present stage. They represent an effort to categorize types of actions in the form of alternative, related patterns rather than merely to frame the process of action. To this observer they do not yet appear to illuminate the key issues of choice persuasively; but it should be noted that further work, beyond the present book, is proceeding, centered on the pattern variables.[1] And the pattern variables do have one basic virtue: they underline the fact that individuals, social units, and societies, in their widest, most conventional sense, can elevate one human quality or relationship only at the cost of another; and they thus dramatize the unavoidable problem of choice that men confront in coping with their total environment—a choice that extends even to the heart of their value system.

IV

Now, what about culture? The majority of the authors take the view that, strictly speaking, a theory of action concerns only individuals and social systems; but they admit culture into the process of action in two ways. First, it is, in large part, the culture of a society which fills the empty boxes; that is, it largely determines the content of the cognitive, cathectic, and evaluative modes of orientation which lead men to act in particular ways,

[1] See especially T. Parsons, R. F. Bales, and E. A. Shils, *Working Papers in the Theory of Action*, Glencoe, Ill., 1953.

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in particular circumstances, with respect to the objects of orientation. Second, culture is not only internalized, but one of the objects of action; that is, it is an element in the environment to which men apply the tripartite orientation process.

To this formulation Professor Kluckhohn and Mr. Sheldon enter reservations. Their views are worth exploring, not to underline an element of discord but because, if pursued, they expose certain of the limits of the general formulation. Professor Kluckhohn states (pp. 26-27 n.):

> . . . there is only one point on which I remain slightly uncomfortable. This is the relation of social structure, social system, role, and culture. Many anthropologists (and certainly the undersigned) will agree today that there is an element in the social (i.e., interactive) process which is not culturally patterned, which is in some sense autonomous from culture. Nevertheless, one whose training, experiences, and prejudices are anthropological tends to feel that the present statement does not give full weight to the extent to which roles are culturally defined, social structure is part of the cultural map, the social system is built upon girders supplied by explicit and implicit culture. On the other hand, whatever my reservations, I welcome the publication of the statement in its present form because I am convinced that in the present stage of social science it is highly useful to behave experimentally with reference to conceptual schemes.

Mr. Sheldon (especially pp. 39-42) underlines the arbitrariness of allocating culture to the empty boxes in a general theory of action, and stresses that culture is itself "a system, or structure, of ordered action," embracing the individual and the social system. He also warns (p. 41) that the use of the concept of culture simply to serve the practitioners of a theory of action might rule out "future developments of this concept along lines which have been shown to have been fruitful."

Confronting this discussion from the outside, one is struck by an analogy to partial equilibrium and general equilibrium analysis in economics. Like the framework for a theory of action, partial equilibrium analysis sets out an approach for dealing with the optimizing decisions of particular action units. In economics the units are the individual consumer or individual producer. Tastes are given from outside the system in the case of the consumer, and the market and cost environment are externally given, in the case of the producer. The determinants

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of tastes and of the over-all market position for products and factors of production are outside partial equilibrium analysis. Perhaps the cultural anthropologist may, at his highest level of aspiration, claim to be the analyst of general equilibrium for societies; for he is concerned to order (and to explain?) the parameters which determine the actual outcome in particular situations of action.[2] Cultural analysis, in its widest sense, is concerned with the relations among all levels of society: culture (in the more limited sense), politics, social structure, and economy. It is, of course, at only an early stage of applying its methods to the analysis of highly differentiated "modern" societies. The present construct, then, leaves to one side—largely for the analyst of cultures—the key determinants of action; and it focuses on the framework of performance of an individual actor rather than of the society as a whole. This is its first major limitation. It is a general theory in that it sets a frame for analyzing all particular decisions by action units; it is not a frame for the general analysis of whole societies.

V

The second substantial limitation of this structure of thought lies in its static quality. The authors are, indeed, aware of this limitation. It is referred to or briefly discussed at various stages of the exposition (notably, pp. 6, 26, 47, 76, 230-33, and 237).

It is the authors' view that change arises in societies from failure of integration. The General Statement includes the following observation (p. 26):

> It must be recognized that no social system is ever completely integrated just as none is ever completely disintegrated. From the sectors of unintegratedness—where expectations cannot be fulfilled in institutional roles or where need-dispositions are frustrated by institutionalized expectations or where the strain is not absorbed in safety-valve mechanisms—from these sectors some of the most important sources of change and growth are to be found.

[2] It should be immediately noted that general equilibrium analysis in economics (like cultural anthropology at its present stage in relation to society) cannot now lay claim to explaining fully all the determinants of economic action, partly because those determinants lie substantially outside the terrain of economics, conventionally conceived, and await the development of more general dynamic approaches to the analysis of whole societies. See below, section VII.

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Since their respective techniques are designed to describe degrees and patterns of integration, it follows in the judgment of the authors that (p. 6): "There is, thus, no difference between the variables involved in description of the state of the system and analysis of its processes. The difference lies in how the same variables are used."

It may or may not be the case that a vocabulary suitable for short-period description will lend itself to dynamic analysis. What is clearly the case is that, over and above the problem of vocabulary, dynamic analysis involves problems of relationship among parts of society (that is, hypotheses about causation) which are not embraced within the present approach to a theory of action. A part of this gap in the present structure arises from the fact that it is left to the analysts of culture to fill the empty boxes of the theory of action. But it is by no means clear that cultural anthropology has not also been primarily concerned with the description of cultural patterns in terms of degrees of integration and disintegration, with the comparison of different static patterns, and with the exploration of the common roots of human cultures, rather than with the causes of the process of change; although increasingly, I gather, anthropologists are addressing themselves to dynamic problems.

Tracing the process of change in a society is an inordinately complex task. I do not see how it can be pursued, in the present imperfect state of knowledge, without facing up to the challenge posed by the fundamental Marxist hypothesis and without narrowing the focus of attention to a clearly defined problem, as opposed to mapping and explaining the total problem of change.

Marx's hypothesis concerning the relationship between the material environment of a society (and especially its structure of production and property rights) and the "superstructure" of social class, political power, and cultural life is, I believe, demonstrably inadequate. The play-back effects of the "superstructure" on the economy were toyed with by Marx and Engels, but never resolved; and, if they had been resolved into some kind of truly interacting system, where material forces and motives lost their primacy, the political message of Marx would have been diluted, lost, or even contradicted.

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The problem of analyzing action over time always confronts the question of how the parts of society interact dynamically. It is not sufficient to posit that they do interact. The key to the analysis of interaction lies less in having a proper vocabulary for description, although some communicable vocabulary is obviously necessary, than in establishing certain hypotheses of relationship (or causation). In fact, to this observer, the most meaningful aspects of the general theory of action lie in some of the assumptions about relationship which are built into it, rather than in its particular categories; for example, the relationship between the values incorporated in a culture and those which find their way into the evaluative process executed by individuals in acting; the relationship of complementarity of expectations (or lack of complementarity) as between individual actors or role units of the social system. These notions have meaning and importance. They belong not only in a static analysis of the structure of a society at any moment of time, but undoubtedly would enter, in some form, into any helpful analysis of a society in movement. Nevertheless, the framework for a theory of action, taken as a whole, neither adequately poses nor solves the even greater problems of relationship as among the parts of a society in movement. Implicit in the whole approach of the authors is a non-Marxist interacting system.[3] In their terms, action might change if the objects of orientation alter, if the content of roles were to alter, or if any of the modes of orientation were to alter. There is no assumption here that change must be initiated from the side of the material objects of orientation: there is only a presumption that change, however initiated, will have consequences for all elements in the social-cultural system. Even this much is not adequately elaborated in the present volume; and, in general, the authors do not accord to the prob-

[3] Professor R. K. Merton has explicitly compared dialectical materialism with the approach of the functional analyst, of which the present volume is roughly representative (*Social Theory and Social Structure*, Glencoe, Ill., 1949, pp. 40-43). Like the authors of *Toward a General Theory of Action*, Professor Merton urges the importance of analyzing change without getting far beyond the general prescription that change will result from lack of integration. It should be noted, however, that he has made several distinguished contributions to dynamic analysis, dealing with narrow problems, historically defined.

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lem of dynamic analysis the priority on the social science agenda that this reviewer would grant to it.

It is, perhaps, significant that those few studies in this area known to the reviewer which are concerned with dynamic problems are not focused on society as a whole, but on one clearly definable problem of change. The economist has a great advantage over other social scientists in that economics furnishes him with a wholly arbitrary, philosophically ambiguous, but mightily useful criterion for judging or even measuring change; that is, change in the level or rate of growth of real income. No equivalent over-all criterion exists in the behavioral sciences unless, as discussed in section VI below, the concept of integration is supplemented by some value hierarchy, of an arbitrariness perhaps equal to that of the economist.

It is natural, therefore, that dynamic studies should be focused on problems in society where change is definable in conceptually quantitative terms. Take, for example, three books which happen to be known to the reviewer: David Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd*, Samuel Lubell's *The Future of American Politics*, and Gunnar Myrdal's *An American Dilemma*. Out of a wealth of organized and casually perceived empirical data Mr. Riesman has concluded that a growing proportion of American citizens are outer-directed; that is, guided in their actions by their view of what others expect of them, rather than by tradition or fixed touchstones of value. He links this believed quantitative shift in the personality character of Americans in relationship to their society (and its politics) to a diminishing rate of population growth, and the close of a period when the primary challenges of American life lay in the mastering of a changing physical environment.[4] Mr. Lubell has an easier quantitative measure to hand in the form of election statistics. He associates changes in the political performance of the American electorate with a heterogeneous group of dynamic changes in income status, relation to racial strain, and so forth. Mr. Myrdal focuses on the changing gap between American society's treatment of white men and Negroes. He explicitly postulates an interacting set

[4] I would have reservations about the adequacy of this interesting but drastically simplified hypothesis.

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of relationships which can affect this gap positively or negatively; and emerges with a prediction that the forces at work in American society, notably the power of the evaluative element incorporated in the American Creed, will in fact tend to narrow the gap over time. These books share, not by accident, three qualities: (a) a problem is defined in such ways that, conceptually at least, change can be referred to quantitatively;[5] (b) the hypotheses that emerge are powerful simplifications, representing the creative insight of the author after an immersion in a mass of empirical data; and (c) in different ways, with greater or lesser crudity, some causal hypotheses are advanced about the connection among sectors of society designed to explain the reason for change; that is, the process of change itself is examined.

By way of rough experiment I have translated the conclusions of these three books into the vocabulary of the framework for a general theory of action. I think it not impossible that the net change examined by these three authors could be retranslated with some rigor into the vocabulary of the book under review. I would say, further, that both Mr. Riesman and Mr. Myrdal have profited by some of the same fundamental insights of relationship and causation which largely determine the framework for action formulated in the present volume. But the heart of their respective achievements lies not merely in the fact that these men have analyzed a mass of empirical data or have used (or failed to use) the most up-to-date set of terms the behavioral sciences afford; it lies rather in the fact that they have focused their attention on the process of change and, having posed a problem quantitative in conception, emerged with a clear net conclusion.

In sum, then, the insights incorporated in the framework for a

[5] There appears to be a view among certain behavioral scientists that only propositions *statistically* verifiable can be truly scientific. This misconception may deny those who accept it access to many important problems of human behavior. It seems quite possible that a wide range of complex questions can be handled in terms which are, in essence, quantitative, permitting statements of relationship and of direction and degree of change. It may be that only limited aspects of human behavior will lend themselves to precise measurement; and that the achievement of some statistical reflection of aspects of human behavior may be confused with analysis and understanding.

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theory of action and even its vocabulary may prove helpful to those concerned with dynamic problems. That framework, however, underestimates the challenges and difficulties involved in the analyzing process; and an emphasis on the importance of the static conceptual framework may mislead students as to the full range and scope of dynamic analysis of problems in society.[6]

VI

I come now to an aspect of the theory of action in which I would merely raise a query. Throughout this book runs the theme that integration is the proper norm for personalities, social structures, and even cultures. My query is this: is not an unexamined value judgment of great power concealed implicitly in the apparently scientific norm of integration? Is the optimum position of an individual or social unit—which means simply that it is doing as well with its given environment as it can—really an optimum? Are there really no meaningful standards by which we can order levels of integration?

It is an evident scientific fact that societies, and even human beings, can be integrated at a wide variety of levels, in the sense that they are content to go on operating or living at that level, if no realistic alternative is open to them. We know that men condemned for long periods to a concentration camp can so adjust themselves to their environment and even sufficiently internalize its values that they may be, to a truly frightening extent, content with their lot. They may, in the end, actually be optimizing gratification rather than avoiding deprivation when the process of interaction of the environment and men has proceeded long and far enough. Are we to identify equilibrium, or tolerable balance, in this clear operational sense, with optimization?

As noted earlier, the economist is equipped with an arbitrary, ambiguous, but useful criterion for value judgment. He can

[6] It should be noted that further development in the work of Professors Parsons and Shils (*Working Papers*) is toward a type of dynamic analysis, concerned with the process of adaptation of small groups. Their first formulations bear a family resemblance to the treatment of comparative statics in economics; that is, a new variable is introduced into an equilibrium position and the adjustment to a new and different equilibrium is examined.

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roughly compare per capita levels of real income in different societies and say one is higher than another; and then identify crudely the extent to which that difference is a product of relative resource endowments as opposed to the society's response to its material potentialities. The society's response, which reflects its over-all value system, the economist can isolate in the "social welfare function," whose roots he does not usually investigate. The equivalent problem in terms of human beings, societies, social structures, or cultures is infinitely more difficult than for economics. And one can understand and sympathize with those who have studied the stable adjustment patterns of different societies and different human beings in resisting the automatic transfer of values from one culture to another. My contact with behavioral scientists is just sufficient for me to hear the cry of "culture-bound" as the series of questions at the beginning of this section are read; and I understand a little and sympathize with that response. The internalization of values does, indeed, pose a most searching question for those who would rate one level of integration higher than another. Are we indeed justified in going beyond the criterion that men be content with their lives and societies content with their pattern of role interrelationships?

Perhaps the answer is something like this. We can array states of integration by value hierarchy only by imposing an arbitrary value scale from the outside.[7] What is essential for the pursuit of science is not that no value scale be applied in analysis, but that we be aware and be explicit concerning the value scale we are applying. The nature and mode of approach of the behavioral sciences have already built into them individualistic and humanistic biases. Social scientists operating in a culture where the primacy of the state over the individual was fundamental might well set up their concepts in quite different ways. There is no escape from our being culture-bound; and the duty of the scientist, as a professional, is to be conscious and explicit

[7] Efforts to avoid the arbitrariness of value judgments are likely to be illusory and simply involve implicit arbitrariness. See, for example, the effort of D. Gregg and E. Williams to define "good" and "bad" in terms of efficiency and inefficiency ("The Dismal Science of Functionalism," *American Anthropology*, October-December, 1948).

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concerning his implicit presuppositions, including those built into the tools of his craft.

But perhaps even more is involved. By accepting the norm of integration the behavioral scientist may deny himself the right to judge, to array, and to prescribe, given his acute awareness of the arbitrariness of the value system of his own culture. In fact, some of the most fruitful work in the behavioral sciences is devoted to exploring the content of modes of cognition, cathexis, and evaluation by individuals and social units in the setting of American objects of action. And there are even such splendid culture-bound prescriptions for action, arising from this study, as Dr. Spock's *The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care*. The Western world in mid-twentieth century urgently needs fresh definitions of its value system, in the light of all that the behavioral sciences have learned, and fresh applications of these redefined values to the changing problems we face. After all, when the smoke has cleared, we are still mostly, in Mr. Robbins' phrase, "individualistic utilitarians," struggling to remain so under the difficult circumstances of our time.[8] The behavioral scientists undoubtedly have much to contribute to the action of men and societies. But, having proved how relative the value system of our Victorian forebears was, they must accept the fact which their own insights dramatize; namely, that, relative or not, value systems matter very much to men and societies, which seek, in a dynamic setting, to continue to apply them in action. In that process, something more can be asked of the behavioral scientist than that he identify degrees of integration and disintegration.

There is a final observation to be made on this theme. If, as is not unrealistic for most times and places over the past several centuries, we assume as the normal case that the environment—the "objects of action"—of men and social structures are changing, what then becomes of the norm of integration? Is not a capability for adjustment to a changing field of action a quality different from integration? If, in short, the central problem for a theory of action is posed dynamically from the beginning, would its categories and even criteria for optimization not be

[8] Lionel Robbins, *The Theory of Economic Policy*, New York, 1952.

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different?[9] Are not most problems of action, under dynamic circumstances, heavily concerned with understanding (and predicting) a changing set of objects and with choosing among conflicting value criteria alive in societies and men's minds at a given moment of time? How many of the problems of choice which concern the students of history (or which worry the mid-twentieth century citizen) would disappear if the objects of action were constant and the concepts which determine cognition and evaluation uniform and stable for all men? I can only attest that economic theory is substantially transformed when it shifts its focus from an examination of tendencies to equilibrium under short-period assumptions to the process of change itself.

VII

The General Statement closes with "A Note on the Place of Economic Theory and Political Theory in the General Theory of Action." The authors pay respectful tribute to the state of refinement of economic theory and accord it status as a special sub-theory of the general theory of action. Economics is thus segregated from the behavioral sciences on the basis of subject matter.

As I have tried to indicate in another connection,[10] there is something more to be said about the relations of the behavioral sciences to economics than this. Perhaps what I have in mind is implied in the following statement (p. 28):

> Its empirical relevance [i.e., economic theory] . . . rests on certain types of development of social systems. Just as the economic variant of instrumental orientation must be placed relative to other types and the particular combinations of action components they involve, so must the empirical processes of special interest to the economist be placed in terms of their relations to those other aspects of the total social system which are not susceptible of analysis in terms of economic theory.

[9] Professor Tolman's brief but theoretically explosive comment on the contribution of "nonintegrated personalities" to the "on-goingness" of a social system (p. 354) should be noted; also, Mr. R. F. Bales' study of "The Equilibrium Problem in Small Groups," *Working Papers*, ch. 4.

[10] *The Process of Economic Growth*, New York, 1952.

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As I am by no means sure that I understand the above quotation, I shall briefly state what I hold to be the link between the theory of action outlined here and certain key problems of economic thought.

Economics takes its shape not merely from the fact that it has agreed on certain categories for describing the frame of action within the economy, but rather from certain basic hypotheses of substance concerning man and his environment; i.e., the assumption of diminishing relative marginal utility on the one hand, and of diminishing marginal productivity on the other.[11] With these foundations, it is possible for the economist to posit certain situations of action and, in a formal maximizing process, which permits the use of mathematical tools, to identify equilibrium states. The inadequacy of economic theory does not arise primarily from the fact that it has been classically developed under assumptions of an atomistic competitive system; that is, under special assumptions concerning the social structure. Economic theory can be made relevant to the resource allocation process under a wide variety of institutional frameworks. The real difficulty arises from the fact that men do not necessarily so act as to maximize the economic possibilities open to them. Economic advance competes, in energy, time, and human resources, with other value objectives. This appears true in all societies, even the most acquisitive. The problem is how to indicate the extent to which the economic activity of men is either reinforced or diminished, in particular societies, by the attachment to values and the pursuit of goals other than economic advance. This is not done by bowing respectfully to the economist and getting on with a general theory of action. Even a static framework for a theory of action should include within its substance the process whereby the actions of men represent an attempt to balance among objectives which often compete, and sometimes converge, and for this purpose, in their present

[11] I sense that Professors Parsons and Shils, in their more difficult terrain, are groping toward some equivalent hypotheses of substance in the pattern variables and developments from them in the *Working Papers*. In fact, it seems possible that they may emerge in time with some more generalized version of diminishing relative marginal utility and of diminishing marginal productivity, of which the economist's version may stand as a special case. For some tentative reflection along this line, see the reviewer's *Process of Economic Growth*, p. 37.

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form, the pattern variables do not suffice. A framework of the kind required would make economics not a discrete sub-area of action, but a part of the general action process.

The second potential relationship between the economist and the behavioral scientist centers on the problem of dynamic economic analysis. It has long been evident to historians that the process of economic growth is entwined with changes in the value system of societies and with related changes in the social and political structure. The postwar concern of the Western world with the economic development of underdeveloped areas has made this perception more general. An increasing proportion of the creative effort of economists is now being devoted to the analysis of the dynamic process of economic growth. It is in this area, I suspect, that one of the most fruitful contributions of the behavioral sciences to useful knowledge is possible.

In this context, however, the static quality of the framework for a general theory of action, discussed above, has a special relevance. By definition, the process of economic growth is dynamic: it takes place over time. The range of issues discussed in section v, above, indicated in general the manner in which the framework for a general theory of action would require elaboration in order to help the economist cope with the analysis of economic growth. In this terrain one is, by definition, concerned primarily with the actual process of interaction rather than with categories for describing the frame of action; and one must be prepared to examine changes in human behavior throughout the society in terms of their impact on certain conceptually quantitative variables which determine the course of growth. I would not, for a moment, urge that the problems of economic growth deserve overwhelming priority as among the issues which might concern the practitioners of behavioral sciences. I would assert, however, that if their insights are to be made useful to the analysts of economic growth, they require a concern with interacting dynamic processes throughout a society and a willingness to focus their arts on sharply defined specific problems, formulated in collaboration with the economist. The approach and method of this book are not calculated to lead students in these directions.

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VIII

The "Note" which concludes the General Statement briefly considers political science as well as economic theory. The authors hold that political theory has traditionally been more a "philosophical and ethical explication" of the problems of government than an "empirical analysis of its processes and determinants." They note (p. 29) that the role of government in societies varies widely and has

> highly diffuse functions in social systems. It seems likely, therefore, that if the empirical focus of political science is to remain on the phenomena of government, it will not as a discipline be able to attain a sharpness of theoretical focus comparable to that of economics. It is more likely to draw from a much wider range of the components of the general theory of action and to find its distinctiveness in the way it combines these components in relation to its special empirical interests, rather than in the technical elaboration of a narrow and sharply focused segment of the theory of action, as is the case with economics.

I am little better prepared to speak as a political scientist than as a behavioral scientist. I would, nevertheless, hazard the view that in the analysis of societies the political process must be elevated, like the economic process, to somewhere near the center of a theory of action. Chapter 4, on "The Social System," contains the following sentence (p. 202): "The allocation of power in a society is the allocation of access to or control over the means of attaining goals, whatever they may be." Power, in this general sense, can by no means be identified, in non-totalitarian societies, with political power. Nevertheless, in almost all modern societies, a substantial part of the control over the means of attaining goals lies with the state; and the manner in which that control is determined and the directions in which it is used is an integral aspect of a society's action. Political theory and the study of government are concerned with the concepts, rules, and processes which determine in particular societies, or which should determine, these important functions. Political action is one of the most important means by which men make their value systems effective or fail to do so. An analysis of society that did not embrace the cognitive, cathectic, and evaluative processes which enter into political action (as

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well as changes in the objects of political orientation) would be incomplete.

In short, I have the same uneasy feeling with respect to politics, in this scheme, as with economics; namely, that a general theory of action cannot have it both ways: it cannot simultaneously claim to be general and, at the same time, maintain the arbitrary (but often convenient) specialist compartmentations into which the social sciences have come to be divided. There may be a good case for letting these specialties develop narrowly for a few more generations, and for not now attempting a general theory of action; scientific progress can be made at many different levels of generality. But, as the authors are well aware, action is the product of choice among alternatives; and man is indivisible. If this is so, a general theory of action must examine the full range of activities into which man plows his energies and among which he allocates his energies. I doubt that a general theory of action can have within it categories as all-embracing as those here formulated, and still leave the economist and political scientist free to go their respective ways, in terms of isolated blocs of subject matter.

The clue to the authors' acceptance of this apparent anomaly may lie partially in that aspect of the theory of action treated in section IV, above; namely, that it is a partial equilibrium rather than a general equilibrium system. It takes as given, from outside its own range of determination, a host of conditions which affect the action of individuals and social units. If, then, the authors are prepared to regard their theory as partial rather than general, this anomaly is in part dissipated, at least for the limited purpose of analyzing special classes of decision-making. It is not fully dissipated, because when men act they act as whole men rather than economic, political, or social men, and the analysis of even narrow forms of action must embrace that hard fact.

In a sense, then, even a partial equilibrium theory of action must be general; and I am not sure that the "Note" which closes the General Statement embraces this fact.

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IX

Now, what does the historian make of all this?[12] Two irreducible qualities of the historian make a formal structure of the kind presented here difficult to use. First, he is dedicated to examining events in their full complexity and uniqueness. In the end, of course, he seeks one form of generalization or another; but he likes to believe that these generalizations emerge from the data, and he is right in not using abstractions which cannot be intimately tied to his data. An abstract framework for a theory of action is likely to be regarded as none of his business. And, further, his acute awareness of the inordinate complexity of human action, in living situations, makes him suspicious of approaches to human behavior that begin with abstractions rather than situations. Second, the historian is by definition an analyst of dynamic process rather than of momentary states. Among the social scientists, he is perhaps alone in being, *ab initio*, a professional at dynamic analysis. The historian instinctively shies away from structures of thought that are inherently static. Note, for example, the virtual divorce of economic historians from the short-period structures of modern economic theory.

Nevertheless, of course, historians do use theory, consciously or unconsciously, in selecting, ordering, and explaining causal relations in their data. Moreover, some of the best of contemporary historians have been profoundly influenced by the same theoretical insights which inform the framework for a theory of action. I would commend to the behavioral scientists, for example, L. B. Namier's essay on "History," which strikingly illustrates the ground shared, as well as the differences in outlook and method, as between the modern historian and the modern behavioral scientist.[13] That essay opens as follows (p. 1):

> The subject matter of history is human affairs, men in action, things which have happened and how they happened; concrete events fixed in time and space, and their grounding in the thoughts and feelings

[12] Just as, in conception, the cultural anthropologist can be regarded as the general theorist of societies, the historian might be described as the cultural anthropologist of highly differentiated dynamic societies: a definition, I daresay, that will please the practitioner of neither art.

[13] *Avenues of History*, New York, 1952.

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> of men—not things universal and generalized; events as complex and diversified as the men who wrought them, those rational beings whose knowledge is seldom sufficient, whose ideas are but distantly related to reality, and who are never moved by reason alone.

The balance of Namier's paper is shot through with reflections on human behavior whose intellectual origins the behavioral scientist will recognize. But he will also find the historian an unregenerate artist, mightily resistant to consistently defined categories and abstract vocabularies, other than those created by the interaction of himself (culture-bound as he is) and his data.

The General Statement in the volume under review includes this comment (p. 27): "We are fully aware that *by itself* it [i.e., the theory of action] cannot do justice to the immense richness and particularity of the human scene." The historian is dedicated, in the first instance, to recording that richness and particularity. This difference in outlook and intent does not necessarily preclude a more intensive and useful dialogue between the two professions than any now proceeding. The historian (notably, for example, the biographer) can forthwith learn much from the behavioral scientist; although the latter must be prepared for shock when he observes the cavalier and eclectic way the historian is likely to employ his tools. And, if the behavioral scientists actually move on to dynamic theory, wider common interests will emerge. Moreover, the historian has much to contribute to making dynamic systems in the behavioral sciences, as in economics. There is a case, even, for regarding the historian as indispensable to the analysis of societies in static cross section. The significance and power over men of any given set of modes of orientation—in any given society or social group, at any particular time—can only be understood and weighed against a background of knowledge of the interacting historical experience which produced them. There is, I believe, a quite formal connection between the work of the historian and the problems posed in this framework for a theory of action.

X

This review is, in an important sense, unfair to the authors. It presents a response, from an outside observer, to an interim

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crystallization of thought in three "on-going" fields, full of hard-working productive scientists. The book's message is not directed to outsiders, but to cultural anthropologists, sociologists, and psychologists, whose eyes are fixed on an ample agenda of unsolved problems in fields whose legitimacy has long since been established.

Moreover, I have barely referred to the elaborations on the General Statement in Parts 2 and 3, and the essays in application and amplification in Part 4. Part 2, for example, includes (Chapter 1 and Fig. 2, p. 248, and Fig. 5, p. 253) a detailed effort to classify (in pattern variables) the differing manner in which men may balance in their actions the elements in the three modes of orientation; and Part 4 contains Professor Stouffer's and Mr. Toby's interesting empirical effort (Chapter 5) to establish, in particular circumstances, the statistical pattern which emerges from certain conflicts in modes of orientation. Part 2, Chapter 3, on "Systems of Value-Orientation," dramatizes the link of value-orientation between culture on the one hand and social structure and personality on the other, and proceeds to a classification of value patterns. Similarly, Part 2, Chapter 4, on "The Social System," examines the strategic link provided by the concept of the role between personality and social structure and expounds, in general, the inherent functions of a social system, its conditions for integration, and some of the patterns integrated social structures may assume. Professor Tolman's "A Psychological Model" (Part 3) represents, to this uninformed reviewer, a persuasive case for at least tentatively re-examining the classical categories of the field in terms of the general theory of action (see especially pp. 355-59). Then there are, among other contributions, Professor Allport's wise (and theoretically agnostic) reflections on the problem of analyzing the causes of prejudice (Part 4, Chapter 1); Professor Kluckhohn's scholarly review of the literature on values and value-orientations (Part 4, Chapter 2), concluding with a definition of some major unsolved problems in this field; and Professor Murray's refinements of category in the classification of interactions (Part 4, Chapter 3). It would be presumptuous for me to pass judgment on these essays except to note that they appear

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to reflect the work of first-rate minds grappling rationally with real problems.

Nevertheless, in the end, we social scientists share a high common purpose: to understand man in society, responding to his environment by action which, dynamically, changes that environment, and thus, in time, changes man himself. Since man is unified, and since men and societies intimately interact, and since the parts of society intimately interact, we had better try to read each other's books and make what we can of the impact they may have and the reflections they may stir in each of us. For better or worse—and I would say for better—we are destined increasingly to be in each other's hair.

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A PHILOSOPHER'S STONE

By MARION J. LEVY, JR.

F. S. C. Northrop, *The Taming of the Nations*, New York, The Macmillan Co., 1952, 362 pp. $5.00.

THE enunciation of what has since been dubbed the Point Four Program sprang from a variety of motives. There was in the aim a very generous portion of sheer American idealism and a desire to help the less fortunate; there was a note of response to a challenge posed for people who believed deeply in what Weber called ascetic mastery over the things of this world; and there was an attempt at a hard-headed realistic program that would "win friends and influence the peoples" of the world in favor of the West in general, but most especially in favor of the United States, in the struggle with the Communists of the USSR for safety and a world of peace. The history of this period and the corollary assessments of good and bad intentions will not be written for some time; for the present, we are concerned with one of the fragment arguments about how these "worthy goals" should be obtained. The goals themselves have found wide agreement in the most divergent camps. No one has effectively challenged the desirability of peace and cooperation among nations, of increased standards of living throughout the world, of improved health conditions, better education, and the like.

The enunciation of the program as the official policy of the United States government raised more than the question of motives, however. It opened a Pandora's box of problems in social engineering and, consequently, in social analysis as well. The box had not really been closed since the beginning of the nineteenth century, despite the fond belief in many quarters that the abandonment of such offensive phrases as "the white man's burden" would keep the lid down. There developed two extremist points of view. One held that the Western industrialized societies had the "know-how" and the capital. The so-called "backward areas" had only to put themselves in the hands of

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an obviously well-meaning group of outside helpers, do as they were told (through interpreters who might or might not fully understand what they were being told to tell), work hard, and watch small versions of Detroit, California, Texas, Iowa, and New York spring up all over the face of the globe—a globe rather weary of the material conditions that accompanied somewhat more "historied" place names. On the other extreme, there were those who shuddered at this picture. Being lineal descendants of Rousseau, they merely wanted to see the material advantages of the West used to restore "primitive societies" to their previous states of idyllic operation, which somehow or other always seemed just to antedate the contacts of these unfortunate peoples with their Western brethren, into whose lives the Industrial Revolution had brought so much that was artificial, etc., etc. . . .

The social engineers who had been forced to take responsibility for actual programs during World War II knew that these points of view were too simple. They hoped for help from the anthropologists, the economists, the sociologists, the social and clinical psychologists, and all the others whose sheepskins served to differentiate their fields. They got very little of a general nature that they could use and apply. They did find that the universities and foundations, the war and the vagaries of Western parents who reared children abroad had made available a pool of experts rich in *ad hoc* knowledge of various "backward areas." It was knowledge frequently offered with great definiteness; it was better than nothing in many cases; and it was almost always difficult to disprove, because these people were sufficiently rare not to have overlapped a great deal in their specialties. However, something more was needed and called for. So far as a considerable portion of the lay public was concerned, this was supplied by F. S. C. Northrop in two volumes, *The Meeting of East and West*[1] and *The Taming of the Nations*. These works were appealing. They seemed to take a middle ground between the two extremes mentioned above, and they presented a general analysis of the problem that could be used as a sort of basic approach to all such problems. The first of these volumes outlines a general position, while the second applies the findings

[1] New York, Macmillan Co., 1946.

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of its predecessor to the problem of attaining peace and prosperity and greater understanding among the nations of the world. It is the second volume with which we are primarily concerned here, but this concern cannot avoid involvement with the first as well.

The Taming of the Nations is a book that a social scientist hates to speak ill of. By the standards of many, if not most, people, Professor Northrop seems to mean well, and he has tried to apply the findings of modern social science to his problem. He is, for example, acutely aware that people in different societies are likely to view the same state of affairs in quite different lights. He is aware that their differences are related to the ways in which they are reared and the manner in which they and their associates regard the world. He sees that such differences are not always easy to understand and are frequently hard to reconcile. He fears that, unless these differences are understood, individual representatives of different nations, each with the best intentions in the world, may go on talking past one another indefinitely—or worse, that they may antagonize one another and each feel that the other is ungrateful, inconsiderate, domineering, or even menacing. The factors to which he points are frequently ignored in a field in which considerations of balances of power, war potential, alliances, international forums, exchanges of diplomatic notes, and discussions of raw material and productive facilities have dominated the scene with relatively little discussion of the implications of differences in social (or cultural) patterns for the actions of persons concerned with these matters. For this, it seems to me, laymen and specialists alike owe Professor Northrop a debt. Regardless of whether or not these things were well known to specialists in his field long before his work, he has been able to raise such questions in a sufficiently striking and popular fashion that laymen and specialists from other disciplines are likely to pay attention to him. More specifically, he has maintained that the peoples of the East and the West view many of these questions from very different bases—that our failures to understand or deal successfully with one another in recent years are not failures that can in any simple sense be

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charged off to stupidity or maliciousness or some combination of the two.

But while I feel we owe him respect for this, I also feel that he has not been able to deal successfully with the actual analysis of the phenomena involved. One may approach Professor Northrop's analysis in a general sense as a set of theories about the distinctions between what he calls the East and the West. Here one is concerned with the concepts he employs, with what his theorems say, and with their tenability. But one cannot go very far in this without an examination of his empirical statements about the societies with which he deals—his assumptions as to what are the facts about social (and cultural) patterns among the peoples of the East and West. Following either of these two approaches or their combination, the results are disturbing. In either case, certain terms must be set forth. These are Professor Northrop's terms: (1) the *theoretic component* (and the closely related *theoretic continuum*), and (2) the *undifferentiated aesthetic continuum*. These two concepts are basic to his work; they (or their equivalents) are used continually to refer to the differences on which he rests his entire argument. The facts alleged about societies are marshaled in these terms. The arguments he employs are presented as empirical arguments, subject to tests. He makes predictions on the basis of them. We must first ask, then, what he means by them.

In *The Taming of the Nations*, Professor Northrop refers us to *The Meeting of East and West* for his denotations for these concepts. This earlier book, though written by a philosopher professionally concerned with problems of method in the sciences, does not give us any very clear-cut and precise definitions of his terms. He defines them in part by example, and in part comes dangerously close to using them in the definitions themselves. On page 163, for example, we find the following definition of the *theoretic component*:

> It is well to have a name for this inferred scientifically known factor in things. Because it is inferred from the immediately apprehended aesthetic component and because it is knowable, therefore, only by means of indirectly verified theory, it seems appropriate, as Chapter VIII will indicate in greater detail, to term it *the theoretic component*.

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On page 333, he builds on this rock as follows:

> As Newton emphasized, sensed space and time are not to be identified with mathematical space and time. The latter continuum, because it is part of the theoretic component in things, and because it is theoretically designated and verified as to its existence only indirectly, rather than by direct apprehension, has been termed the theoretic continuum, to distinguish it from the immediately apprehended aesthetic continuum.

On page 335, there is this sort of definition:

> It will help tremendously in appreciation of this standpoint and in future consideration of the Buddhist element in Chinese culture if two factors are distinguished within the complex differentiated aesthetic continuum. These two factors have already made themselves evident. One is the all-embracing, immediately apprehended unity and continuity apart from the sensed or introspected differentiations and qualities within it. It is appropriate to call this the indeterminate or undifferentiated aesthetic continuum (Plate XIV).[2] The other is the aggregate of differentiations and qualities apart from the continuum in which they appear. These may be termed the aesthetic differentiations (Plate X, were the pointillist dots so large one could see them more clearly [sic]).[3]

I have given these definitions at some length, because I fear that any shorter version of them would prejudice the issue. I am frankly at a loss to know how one uses concepts so defined for purposes of scientific analysis. I have traced these concepts through Professor Northrop's various chapters—always with greater confusion on my part as to just what their referents were. My difficulties in this respect are heightened by the fact that from time to time Professor Northrop asserts that this "undifferentiated aesthetic continuum" is never experienced by itself[4] (I presume that this is at least in part because, to be so, it would have to be differentiated in some sense), and that, furthermore, it is in some sense unknowable, from the point of view of an observer at least, since it is not "perceived by the senses."[5] Nevertheless, one must try to use these concepts, because it is in terms of them that Professor Northrop sees the

[2] Plate XIV is a reproduction of a Sung Dynasty painting, which is identified as such. The plate is then labeled: "The Undifferentiated Aesthetic Continuum."

[3] Plate X is a reproduction of a painting by Seurat. It is identified as such, and is then labeled: "Hume's Atomic Sense Data as Associated by a Frenchman."

[4] See *The Meeting of East and West*, p. 335.

[5] See *The Taming of the Nations*, p. 75.

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basic failure of a meeting of the minds between the East and the West.

The next step in Professor Northrop's analysis is to set up a construct referred to as the *Asian mind*, as contrasted, presumably, with the *Western* or *non-Asian mind*. The "Asian mind" faces the basic problems of world cooperation and peace by recourse to the "undifferentiated aesthetic continuum," which seems empirically to lead to a preference for negotiation, mediation, compromise, etc., rather than for any clear-cut laws, decisions, etc. Here we run into a problem involving both Professor Northrop's perceptions of the data and a rather curious turn of the analysis. Basically, he seems to view China and India as almost identical in these respects. There are some variations in the cases of Japan and the Near East, but they do not really affect the argument on this level. Let us leave the question of data to a later section of this review. Regardless of differences not mentioned by Professor Northrop, he is aware that even within these societies there are practices and attitudes that do not fit in with the domination of the "undifferentiated aesthetic continuum" as he sees it—that imply, rather, the Western "theoretic" orientation. How are these inconvenient matters handled? After all, it is difficult to allege that a nation characterized by even a decaying caste system of the proportions of India's is thinking in undifferentiated terms, and a moment's consideration reveals that the detailed explicitness of ritual procedures that abound there does not fit well with such a synonym for the "undifferentiated aesthetic continuum" as "undifferentiated immediacy consciousness."[6] For Professor Northrop, these inconveniences are easily disposed of: they are simply not "purely Asian."[7] Curiously enough, they turn out to be "Aryan" imports. Since this method is used whenever discrepancies cannot be reconciled by allegations about the facts,[8] Professor Northrop

[6] Professor Northrop notes that "The word 'aesthetic' was used there [in the phrase 'the undifferentiated aesthetic continuum'] in the sense of immediacy, but not in the sense of sensed immediacy." See *The Taming of the Nations*, p. 76.

[7] See, e.g., *ibid.*, pp. 87-88.

[8] E.g., one sees in *ibid.*, pp. 77-78, that the differences between Confucianism and Taoism are reconciled, both being examples of orientation to the "undifferentiated aesthetic continuum." Emphasis on compromise and peace-making is given as an example. This is done despite the possibility (if not probability) that such an emphasis,

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has in effect set up a proposition that is not conceivably falsifiable—that is to say, anything that does not fit his characterization of the true "Asian mind" is *ipso facto* not an example of the true "Asian mind." This leaves us with many theorems that are true by definition, but also with some real questions as to what they say and what they apply to.

There is a sense in which Professor Northrop represents the true romanticism of our day with regard to these problems. He knows that we do not always understand others or they us, that the spread of our customs and habits will have very broad implications, that our ways, for all our devotion to them, are far from perfect in the eyes of others and even of ourselves, and that our problems will not be solved easily, even by applications of the Golden Rule.[9] He feels that we must leave it up to the members of other nations to decide what it is they want from among our customs and products. He seems to believe that they can and will take what they wish and no more, and that, left to themselves, they may eventually produce a blend of the "best" of the East and the West. Most social analysts agree heartily that one should not try to shove our customs and products on those unwilling to receive them, and that one could not if one would, short of achieving a world dictatorship of the sort seemingly sought by the Kremlin. But the alternative proposed by Professor Northrop does not get us very far either. I think most modern research in the social sciences leads one to conclude that it is exactly those factors he considers the "best of the East" that are most radically incompatible with what he considers to be the "best of the West," and vice versa. For all his talk of members of other societies making a "free" choice of the elements they use and of our permitting them to do just this, he must be aware of the extremely limited possibilities, if not the impossibility, of any such thing being done.

The limitation on these possibilities has a curious and frustrat-

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in one case, is considered a rational adjustment to an imperfect world and, in the other, struggle is considered to be the ultimate involvement in things of this world and hence is to be avoided.

[9] In this field, at least, George Bernard Shaw's emendation of the Rule holds: Do not do unto others as you would have others do unto you; they may have different customs.

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ing basis. The kind of things the West has to offer from the material point of view has a widely generalized appeal. Most notably, these factors offer alternatives to "traditional" action that did not previously exist in non-industrialized societies. These societies were not without their internal stresses and strains long before industrialization developed in the West, and they were not without their contacts with the West prior to that time. Still, the sort of one-way social penetration that is so much a source of concern to those in the "underdeveloped areas" did not really take on notable proportions until the age of industrialization. There were conquests, of course, but the disintegration of indigenous patterns and their change in the direction of modern industrial ones (or simply the production of a chaotic state of disintegration of the indigenous patterns) has been primarily a matter of the last century.[10]

Many, if not most, of the non-industrialized societies produced plenty of internal stresses and strains, but these were frequently kept from precipitating radical changes in the system by virtue of the fact that alternative ways of living were not open to the rebels. In some cases at least, the basis of employment was strategic in this respect. People were hired on the basis of who they were rather than of what they could do, and rebels automatically cut themselves off from the accepted forms of employment. When very slight amounts of employment were offered on relatively impersonal grounds, many were given a possible alternative place to stand, as it were. By so doing, such employment simultaneously threatened the general sources of control over deviance. This has nothing to do with any conscious decision by the members to upset their own societies or to adopt new patterns. It is enough if alternative patterns were made available to them and if there was, resultant from the operation of the indigenous patterns, any source of motivation leading them to seek an alternative pattern. These motives might be as diverse as a desire to increase one's wages or a desire to get away from a domineering mother-in-law. Among many other

[10] For example, prior to the last century the types of decay so prominent in China were typical of the dynastic cycle there for some two thousand years; whereas within the last century a radical change in the society, rather than a refurbishment of the "traditional" patterns, seems to have been in the making.

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patterns relevant for these purposes, one of the most distinctive facets of highly industrialized societies is the uncommon degree to which their members treat one another not on the basis of detailed personal identifications, but rather on the basis of the possession of certain qualities or resources deemed germane from the point of view of the relationship. It would be beside the point here to go into the implications of this for highly industrialized systems, but the implications of introducing such habits and attitudes into social systems which depend in considerable part for their cohesion on treating people on a highly personalized basis are not difficult to imagine. Sound arguments can probably be advanced to the effect that "the best of the West" cannot be introduced in the East without simultaneously introducing this sort of pattern. If this is the case, it will matter little whether in some sense the inhabitants of the East have chosen the elements they introduce of their own "free will." They will still see disrupted many of their "traditional" patterns that they had no thought of disturbing. They are likely to trace this disruption to the patterns from outside, and if they do, they are extremely likely to resent the source of these introductions, however innocent it may be. A nicety and objectivity in the application of praise and blame for situations found to be upsetting are not, perhaps, characteristic of the humans of any society.

There is another bit of analysis that runs like a thread through *The Taming of the Nations*, showing more clearly at some times than at others. We are told that the problem lies in the fact that the differing orientations of different peoples stem from their different cultural backgrounds, etc. But on pages 71-72 the point is somehow made that the Hindu sees things as they *really are*, that for us to do this we must "wrench ourselves away from all our previous beliefs and conceptions and think in terms of what we immediately observe." This smacks of a combination of the "natural vs. artificial" point of view, with a certain dash of the *tabula rasa* approach thrown in. Since "they" see things as things are "immediately observed," the problem is certainly not one of two alternative sets of social conditioning. Surely, the contrast has become one between those who view the events

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of this world in terms of "previous beliefs and conceptions" and those who know and face "reality." This view may be closer to what Professor Northrop really means, but it is certainly hard to reconcile with what he seems to say at many other points in his works.

I am sorely perplexed by the analysis in *The Taming of the Nations,* but there is more to the volume than this. There is a great deal of apparently factual treatment of the Far East, the Near East, and the West. I would be unfair to the author if I did not state at this point that I have not worked at all on the Near East, and very little on India. My knowledge of the West has some basis in participant observation and some in attempted analysis of social structure. Empirically speaking, however, most of my work has been on China and Japan, and what I have to say about the empirical material in Professor Northrop's volume is said from the impression made on me by his treatment of materials on these two countries. On his other materials, I prefer to take what is technically an agnostic position. I should be less than frank, however, if I did not state clearly that his treatment of the areas on which I have done research does not give me a feeling of confidence about his empirical statements relative to the other areas.

The disturbance I feel, in almost every case, in regard to Professor Northrop's treatment of China and Japan arises from the fact that it seems vastly oversimplified. Again and again, I find bits that are characteristic of one portion of the social systems generalized to cover the whole field. For his interpretations of China, Professor Northrop seems to have relied almost entirely upon an extremely interesting volume by a single Chinese, Chiang Monlin,[11] without once raising the question of whether this man's views were in fact as characteristic of the whole society as Professor Northrop's use of them implies. He notes that the Chinese are a "this-worldly and practical people," quotes Chiang Monlin as saying, "The Chinese is contented with his immediate world and has never wanted to speculate far and deep in nature," and adds himself, "He is contented also more

[11] *Tides from the West,* New Haven, Conn., 1947.

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with enjoying immediacy than transforming it."[12] Well, that depends, of course, on what things one looks at. It is these same Chinese, dominated by Taoism, Confucianism, and other religious orientations, who built the Great Wall, planned and executed the irrigation system in the Chengtu area, built the Grand Canal (an inland waterway over a thousand miles long), etc. All of these things certainly required rather deep insight into nature for their time, and they certainly did transform it—quite intentionally. This sort of accomplishment goes quite far down among the "common people," too. Look at any Chinese rice paddy area—particularly those in hilly country—and ask yourself what it means to say that these people are "contented more with enjoying immediacy than transforming it."

There are many other attitudes of which Professor Northrop as a non-specialist in these areas may understandably not be aware. It is true that modern science as we know it—especially in its powerfully cumulative form—is not characteristic of China, despite the fact that many intriguing discoveries were made by individual scholars. But it does not follow that they lacked either the ability or the inclination to think in the kind of coldly critical, empirically oriented, highly differentiating fashion that has characterized scientific interest in "natural" phenomena in the West. Look into the field of textual analysis seeking to date texts and distinguish corrupted from non-corrupted texts—something the Chinese have been very much interested in. Here one will find a sophistication and objectivity that Western historical scholarship was extremely late in matching, and probably never will surpass.

I have already mentioned in another connection what different interpretations may be put on Confucian and Taoist attitudes toward compromise. But there are many other questions raised in this volume. Professor Northrop has handled the codes and caste distinctions among the Hindus by dubbing them "non-Asian," but Confucianism he claims for the purely Asian, noting that "For our purposes . . . the differences separating Confucianism and other Far Eastern ways of life are less important than

[12] *The Taming of the Nations*, pp. 77-78.

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the similarities uniting them."[13] What then are we to make of the *Book of Rites*, certainly the epitome of a highly differentiated, highly uncompromising code of etiquette? It was also followed most meticulously by those who were most Confucian.

Professor Northrop makes much of the fact that the Chinese, in the past at least, preferred to settle disputes without recourse to the courts or to the law of the land.[14] The fact is true; but that this verifies a basic orientation of Chinese society away from the explicit, etc., does not necessarily follow. Recourse to the magistrates in China was extremely likely to be disastrous for both parties and beneficial only for the magistrate, or the decision was often likely to be in favor of the man capable of offering the larger bribe. It is highly doubtful that Chinese preference for compromise led to the feeling that courts of law were traps. They were in Chinese experience extremely likely to be traps. It might be added that Chinese sources of all sorts abound in cases of individuals who did not hesitate for a moment to bring cases to court if the courts were known to be honest and just, or if they were sure of controlling the courts. Under these circumstances the Chinese seem to have shown little or no interest in compromise as opposed to clear-cut decisions.[15]

I am afraid the treatment has been oversimplified out of all resemblance to Chinese society. It would be bootless to go on citing difficulties on this score. In this field, the first thing the student learns is to be exceedingly wary of the informant—not because the latter is sly or deceitful, but because he may not mean what one thinks he means. Let me give one example of this problem. I have questioned many Chinese in a small village as to what the family system in China is like, and initially have always been given the romantic fairy-tale picture of a large-scale gentry family. I have then said, in effect, "How can that be, when here in your village no one seems to be living in

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 78.

[14] E.g., *ibid.*, pp. 126, 187.

[15] Incidentally, anyone familiar with the practice of civil law in the United States is well aware that lawyers who are considered highly expert here strive to keep their clients out of the courts; they frequently prefer settlements out of court, and so advise their clients. Does this indicate a basically "Asian mind" in these lawyers—overlaid, no doubt, by some "Aryan influences" that account for such recourse to the courts as exists?

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large units such as you describe?" The answer has always come back that these local villagers were too poor and unfortunate to live in "*the* Chinese fashion." One learns much from such an experience. One learns: (1) that the average Chinese is not living in a family system that corresponds to what the average Chinese feels to be a proper one; (2) that the idea of a proper family system is common to virtually all the different sorts of people one can find, whether their own patterns approximate it or not (this in the rural areas at least); and above all, (3) that the answers given are by no means intentionally misleading or false, even though they do not mean what they seem to mean to the naïve or the unwary.

In an adult professional journal it is incumbent upon a reviewer to speak frankly, and in a scientific journal the distinction between destructive and constructive criticism is meaningless. Professor Northrop has tried to raise some of the most important practical problems with which we are faced in the world today, and he has tried to show that these problems cannot be handled solely in terms that have been used for them in the past. This should make his book a useful one, but it is simultaneously a dangerous one. If his data or his interpretations of his data on other areas are similar to those on China and Japan, and if his general treatment depends on these, then we must discard his volume as anything but an extremely well-intentioned statement of a problem. In the case of China and Japan, he simply does not show awareness of even the first level of complexity of those social systems. Furthermore, those complexities are directly germane to the conclusions he proposes to draw. Secondly, I, for one, can put little faith in his analysis itself. Where I can put it into terms that I can follow as analysis, I find it well behind present development in the work of such men as Wilbert Moore,[16] Kingsley Davis, and Bert Hoselitz in raising the problems concerned with the contact between modern Western societies and other forms of social systems. In many other cases, I cannot follow it at all, because I cannot identify the referents of his concepts with any exactitude, or because statements are

[16] See, e.g., his *Industrialization and Labor*, Ithaca, N.Y., 1951.

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made and then contradicted (at least implicitly), or because the analysis turns out to be true by definition.

Nevertheless, the problems Professor Northrop poses are real problems. I do not think we shall move one step along the road to solving them via such concepts as the "undifferentiated aesthetic continuum," but there is no doubt that there are vital differences between the relatively non-industrialized societies and the highly industrialized ones with which their members are now in contact. Furthermore, there is something in the non-industrialized societies that makes certain aspects of the highly industrialized systems appeal to their members. There is also something about the patterns that are taken over—regardless of who takes the initiative—that, in a startling number of cases at least, acts like a social solvent on the patterns of the non-industrialized society. And this seems to hold true whether there is an attempt to import modern industry in the narrow sense, or whether there is merely an attempt to use the discoveries from the West to improve agricultural yields or health conditions. The distinctions germane here are a great deal more complicated than a distinction between attitudes toward compromise and negotiation. The problems are not likely to be solved by any descendant of the "pre-rational" hypothesis of nineteenth-century social science.

To face up to the real problem posed by Professor Northrop, we must ask a formidable performance from our social analysts. They must first find out what are the various structures in the societies concerned that are relevant to these problems, how these structures are interrelated, what are the structures that are likely to be imported, and what the differential implications of such importations are likely to be. If we know this sort of thing, we may be able to find a solution that will benefit everyone and may even be understood by everyone to do so. If we are to make any claims to being scientific, we must also stay well aware of the unpleasant possibility that an increase in knowledge of this sort may make a negative prognosis the more certain.

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APPROACHES TO THE PROBLEM OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

By ALBERT KERVYN

Bert F. Hoselitz, ed., *The Progress of Underdeveloped Countries*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1952, pp. x, 296. $4.75.
Measures for the Economic Development of Underdeveloped Countries, New York, United Nations, May 1951, pp. 108. 75 cents.

I

THESE two books provide an opportunity to compare the approach of the economist and of other social scientists to the problem of economic development, although neither volume can be taken as a fair measure of the contributions the various disciplines can make to understanding the growth process in particular societies.

The United Nations Report, which is the work of a group of economists appointed by the Secretary General of the organization, aims at policy more than analysis. It is also quite general in character, and a discussion that embraces the tremendous diversity of so-called underdeveloped countries must perforce maintain a distressing level of abstraction. Despite this structure, the Report remains eminently readable.

The Progress of Underdeveloped Countries is a collection of papers presented at the twenty-seventh Institute of the Norman Wait Harris Foundation, and represents all the social science disciplines. The papers, however, are largely independent of one another: some are addressed to particular problems, others aim at the same level of generality as the UN Report. This disparity precludes, of course, the presentation of an integrated view of the process of social change. Further, the vocabulary and the concepts change from paper to paper. Here the economists have the advantage of an older discipline in which domestic quarreling, decade after decade, has resulted in some degree of a common use of words and ideas.

The Chicago compendium contains contributions by historians, sociologists, cultural anthropologists, and men of affairs, as

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well as economists. There is one paper by a political scientist that I found of special interest, perhaps because it deals with a definite problem, Communism, in a limited area, South East Asia.

This review will discuss assumptions and biases more than content. The UN Report will be used to exemplify the economists' point of view, and this will be compared to the approach of the sociologists and anthropologists. No slight is intended to the historians, economists, and others who made some valuable contributions in the *Progress* volume.

A warning is in order at this stage: the reviewer is an economist and so unversed in the other disciplines that he still finds himself occasionally awed, and more often irritated, by the jargon in which some of them are prone to express themselves.[1] The reader will thus have to make allowances both for ignorance and for ingrained prejudices.

II

To start with a well-worn truism, the assumption made by economists regarding human behavior is that each individual tries to maximize his "welfare." That economists have difficulty in defining "welfare" and cannot measure it matters little: for all practical purposes, an increase in income is treated as equivalent to an increase in welfare.

This pecuniary definition of human motivation is obviously too narrow, even when one is dealing with highly commercialized societies whose accepted values stress money and economic success. It breaks down almost completely when dealing with groups where the major emphasis is placed on entirely different factors. Economists are of course fully aware—one is tempted to write: painfully aware—of this fact. What appears in their terms as irrational behavior, and as inappropriate institutions which

[1] *The Progress of Underdeveloped Countries* is fortunately freer than most such volumes from this defect. I cannot, however, refrain from quoting the following sentences, which occur on p. 116: "Cognitively speaking, a relationship will be classified as rational or nonrational. The relationship as a whole will be considered more or less nearly rational or nonrational to the extent rationality is or is not institutionally expected of the action in terms of the relationship." For all I know, this may not be a simple tautology.

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weaken the economic incentives, are obstacles which must be brushed aside on the way to progress defined as growth in (monetary) income.[2]

Now, the sociologist starts at the other end: his principal interest lies in this economically irrational behavior. To him, it is the product of a culture and of a social structure, both of which (to the extent that the society is "integrated") fulfill the aspirations of its members. Economic progress may be desirable, but it involves the disintegration of existing structures, the abandonment of traditional values, and thus heavy social costs, even if the danger of a complete social breakdown ("anomie") is averted.

Taking integration as the optimum situation for any society leads, of course, to a static approach; where all the elements of a culture have a role to play, and are closely interrelated, there is grave risk in taking over elements from outside. Today not many anthropologists may subscribe to Malinowski's famous statement that "magic fulfills an indispensable function within culture" (in the article on Anthropology in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* of 1926), but something of this approach lingers in the stress that is placed on the dangers of and resistances to change, rather than on the mechanisms of adaptation to change.[3] While the economists, with their "welfare" criterion, may tend to underestimate the costs of change, the criterion of "integration" might lead to overstressing its difficulties and perhaps discounting its benefits.

The concern of the anthropologists may be more justified in the case of the more primitive societies, just as resistances to change tend to be greater in subsistence agriculture than in in-

[2] Herbert Frankel, an economist himself, bitterly reproaches the UN Report with using aggregate or average income as a measure of true progress without taking into account the losses that may be incurred in the process of moving from a rural to an urban setting. (See his "United Nations Primer for Development," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, LXVI [August 1952], pp. 301ff.)

[3] Lest this criticism appear unfair, may I quote from a sociologist: "The great concern of functional sociologists and anthropologists with problems of social order and with the maintenance of social systems, has generally focused their scientific attention on the study of processes whereby a social system is preserved largely intact" (Robert K. Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure*, Glencoe, Ill., 1949). This statement may be more true of the anthropologists than it is of the sociologists—but it is mostly the anthropologists we are dealing with in connection with underdeveloped countries.

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dustry or other occupations. On the whole, too much emphasis seems to be placed on groups which still maintain a tribal form of organization, and this leads to a systematic underestimation of the ability of most cultures to absorb new elements. For instance, I confess to being somewhat irritated at the recurring appearance of the Navaho Indians and similar groups in these essays. There is truth in the oversevere criticism directed at the anthropologists by a practitioner of Point Four aid: "Industry is not likely to outrun the chances for social adjustment in local societies. Let us leave their rightful places in the anthropology textbooks to the shrinking-violet cultures of primitive people. Most of the underdeveloped countries are not of this type" (*Progress*, pp. 235, 236).

III

The UN Report devotes a brief preliminary chapter to the preconditions of economic development. It succeeds in giving brief mention to most of the significant and generally valid factors making for resistance to change which, in the other book, are spread over six lengthy sociological essays. Among these factors are the lack of economic motivation that arises from a low social value being placed on increasing income, or from the system of joint family ownership. The latter exemplifies the general problem of the transition from a system based on group responsibility and sharing to a system based on individual accomplishments and benefits. The economists also recognize the importance of the elite groups and see that their resistance may be a major obstacle, if they feel threatened in their position. Moreover, they stress the fact that rigid social structures tend to frustrate the desirable occupational mobility, or, as one sociologist puts it: "It is eu-functional . . . to place high emphasis on universalistic criteria of employment" (p. 122).

While the economists miss some of the lesser points (for instance, about the rhythm of life and the schedule of meals), they add some of their own in the fields of politics and legal restrictions. Basically, they recognize that the main difficulty in achievement of economic progress arises from displacement of

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the old set of values. Here their statement is worth quoting in full: "Ancient philosophies have to be scrapped; old social institutions have to disintegrate; bonds of caste, creed and race have to be burst. Very few communities are willing to pay the full price of rapid economic progress" (p. 15). There speaks the iconoclast, impatient of everything that may slow the rhythm of change, of any objective conflicting with economic growth. This prescription seems too simple—and brutal—not to raise doubts about its wisdom.

A more serious criticism is that the economists, having thus made their bow to the cultural factor, pay little attention to it in their subsequent discussion. They lay emphasis on education for technical tasks and institutional reform, and stress that the leaders of the country must desire economic progress, that there must be "a will to advance"; but they have very little to say about the process of social change that can create favorable institutions and the will to advance, etc. In fact, the process of development is discussed almost exclusively in terms of its economic variables, without any sort of historical perspective.

This is the great deficiency of the economists and one that the sociologists may be expected to fill. In terms of analysis, some of them seem to agree with the economists that economic change will cause a total subversion of existing values, because of a postulate of the functional unity of culture and society. Others, however, take a more discriminating view and speak about the problem of selective cultural change (this is actually the title of one of the essays in the Foundation compendium).

This sounds very much like the right approach, since it is likely that efforts at economic progress will be frustrated unless the new wine can to some extent be poured into the old bottles. While the sociologists do not appear to have succeeded any better than the economists in evolving a general theory of the relationship between economic progress and social and cultural change, they clearly have—even at this early stage of their discipline—a great contribution to make in this field.

Their analysis and advice may be somewhat disappointing at the very general level of discussion maintained in these essays, but there is little doubt that their tools are best fitted to deal with

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the specific problems of change and adjustment that confront individual societies. In most of the essays, the authors draw on a rich factual background and show tantalizing glimpses of what their method of analysis could yield in concrete cases. The examples they quote are usually most interesting and stimulating.

IV

As mentioned above, a major criticism of the UN Report is its failure to present an integrated view of economic progress; having recognized the crucial importance of the cultural and social factors, the Report promptly forgets about them; and the bulk of the discussion thereafter is in terms of the familiar economic problems of capital formation, technological change, the allocation of resources, and priorities in development.

On each of these topics the contributors have something to say that is useful. Their emphasis on government planning and their views of the relation between agricultural development and industrialization are often at variance with commonly held American positions. It is only fair to add that much of their discussion is likely to prove equally unpopular in the underdeveloped countries. But this hardly goes to the root of the problem, and the last part of the Report is particularly disappointing in that the authors seem to revert to a purely mechanical concept of progress, which they treat as simply dependent on the volume of capital formation.

The major novel feature of the Report, and the one that has caught the public eye, is the discussion of "measures requiring international action." Here the authors are concerned with the amounts of capital that would be required to raise the level of per capita income in the underdeveloped countries by an arbitrary 2 per cent per annum. Calculations are presented with due misgivings as to their accuracy and only to indicate the order of magnitude of the problem, from which it would appear that $19 billions would be required annually; of this sum, slightly more than $5 billions could be supplied by domestic savings, leaving a gap of some $14 billions for foreign capital to fill.

This is a startling figure, and so the authors intended it.

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Private capital exports from the United States and Europe to the underdeveloped countries have not reached $1 billion per annum in recent years,[4] and international institutions can at best provide a few hundred million dollars a year. Since a government program of aid exceeding $10 billions a year appears to be outside the realm of practical politics, the clear implication is that an acceptable rate of progress is out of reach for most underdeveloped countries. This conclusion would, of course, imply a direct threat to the political stability of the free world.

However, the authors themselves do not appear to attach too much importance to the figure they advance; their recommendations aim at a flow of international investment that would reach $4 billions a year. And this is common sense: although they do not repeat it, the authors may have kept in mind their earlier warning that "very few communities are willing to pay the full price of economic progress" (p. 15). Also, some countries willing to pay that price may not want foreign capital, even if it were offered. For instance, to mention the most obvious ones, leaving out China, Mongolia, and North Korea would reduce the need for foreign financing by nearly $6 billions on the calculation of the Report.

Even if one assumed that all other countries are ready for economic progress, the calculation itself remains open to a fundamental technical objection. Investment requirements for industrialization are taken at $10 per head of the population per year for each of the areas shown separately in the table. This results from assuming that 1 per cent of the working force is each year shifted from agriculture to "industry"; that the necessary investment to go with this shift is $2,500 per head; and (unstated) that the labor force is 40 per cent of the total population. This investment is then assumed to permit an annual increase in the national income of 1.5 to 2 per cent per annum,

[4] Net United States long-term private capital exports to areas other than Europe and Canada were 0.6 billion dollars in 1949, 0.3 in 1950, and 0.3 in 1951. (These figures are very close to those for direct investment in these areas; for exact figures, see *Balance of Payments of the U.S., 1949-1951*, Department of Commerce, 1952.) Private capital exports from Europe (mostly the United Kingdom and France to their respective monetary areas) were 0.4 in 1949, 0.2 in 1950, and 0.6 in 1951. Over the three-year period, the average is $0.8 billion, half of which came from Europe. (International Monetary Fund, *Balance of Payments Yearbook, 1950-51*.)

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according to countries, and no justification is offered for this figure.

Now, this line of reasoning is completely fallacious, as can be readily seen by considering the implied values of the ratio between capital investment and net addition to income. It is a well-established statistical fact that this ratio shows a remarkable degree of steadiness, both in the same country over time and as between countries. Ernest Stern, for instance, has calculated this capital-output ratio for the United States at 3.27, for the United Kingdom also at 3.27, and for South Africa at 1.9.[5] Using a somewhat different method, Fellner has recalculated the United States data for the same period (1879-1929) and finds 3.44.[6] Colin Clark has assembled data (admittedly often unreliable) on a wide range of countries and periods, and calculates from them "normal" values ranging from 3.0 to 4.7.[7] The most recent and sophisticated calculations made for the United States economy under the direction of Professor Leontief indicate an average of some 3 to 1. They also bear out the fact that capital coefficients for the same industry are of the same order of magnitude in different countries.[8]

Economic theory would lead one to expect that this ratio should be lower in the underdeveloped countries than in the United States or the United Kingdom. (Since capital is scarcer, industry would be organized on a less capital-intensive or more labor-intensive basis.) As the Report points out, however, it is unlikely that the capital coefficients are very different between more and less developed countries. The new Indian five-year plan, for example, assumes an over-all capital-output ratio of 3 to 1.[9]

Now, the way the calculation is made in the Report means that the lower the per capita income of the region it considers, the

[5] Ernest H. Stern, "Capital Requirements in Progressive Economies," *Economica*, XII (August 1945), pp. 163ff.

[6] William Fellner, "The Capital-Output Ratio in Dynamic Economics," in *Money, Trade and Economic Growth; Essays in Honor of John Williams*, New York, 1951, pp. 126ff.

[7] Colin Clark, *The Conditions of Economic Progress*, London, 1951, p. 503.

[8] Vassili Leontief, et al., *Studies in the Structure of the American Economy*, New York, 1953, ch. 6.

[9] *The First Five-Year Plan*, Government of India, January 1953, Part I.

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higher is the implied capital-output ratio. For the poorest area, the Far East, the ratio would be 12.5; for South Asia (India, Pakistan, Ceylon) it would be 9.1; while for Latin America, where incomes are higher, it falls as low as 3. Applying the method of the Report to the United States, one would obtain the ridiculous result that the capital ratio is 0.3. For investment in agriculture, the Report uses the more sensible method of assuming that in all countries an investment of 4 per cent of national income would raise net annual incomes by 1 per cent, thus implying a constant (if probably too high) capital-output ratio of 4.[10]

The excessively high ratios implied in the Report mean, of course, that a very great volume of investment is needed to attain a relatively modest target for output growth. Thus, for the Report to claim that it indicates at least the order of magnitude of the problem appears quite unjustified. If we use the data given in the Report on national incomes and domestic savings in the underdeveloped countries, but exclude China, we would find that, in order to attain an annual rate of growth of 3 per cent, the requirements for capital imports would be $5 billions a year with over-all capital coefficients of 3.5. With the ratio of 3 to 1 used in the Indian five-year plan, requirements would fall to $3.6.[11] The latter is probably on the low side, because of the large share of agricultural development in the Indian plan.

It may be noted that the results of this calculation come closer

[10] Dr. Hans Singer has recently presented a numerical model for economic development in an interesting article, "The Mechanics of Economic Development," *Indian Economic Review*, Delhi (September 1952). Dr. Singer is a member of the United Nations staff and presumably assisted the five experts in the preparation of their report. His model is, in fact, very similar to the one used in the Report, and although his capital coefficients appear to be on the high side (4 for agriculture, 6 and 4 for industry), he has avoided the methodological pitfalls into which the Report has fallen.

[11] Applying a single capital coefficient without distinction between agriculture and industry is of course a very crude method, but the margin of error in the income and savings data is such as to make a more refined treatment hardly worth the while. The calculation would be as follows: total income (excluding China, etc.) would be $90 billions. Three per cent growth would imply an annual increase of $2.7 billions. With a capital coefficient of 3.5, the investment required would be $9.5 billions, of which domestic savings can supply $4.5 billions, leaving a deficit of $5 billions. With a capital coefficient of 3, the required investment would be $8.1 and the deficit $3.6 billions. Three per cent annual growth is the assumption of the Report.

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to the practical recommendations of the Report (which calls for a flow of international capital of $4 billions a year) than the calculations of the Report itself. But this is incidental; such calculations mean exceedingly little. Even "orders of magnitude" have little validity at this level of aggregation. Secondly, treating domestic savings as a fixed quantity is to a large extent a denial of the whole process of domestic development and change. Finally, and most important of all, while capital formation is an essential condition for economic development, it is by no means the only condition, even in the economic field. And the first part of this review has sufficiently stressed that development does not depend only on economic variables.

The conclusion that seems to emerge from reading these two books is that the next major effort on the part of the sociologists, historians, and anthropologists should be to formulate some more general theory of social change in which the most significant variables are singled out and their functional relationship outlined. The essay in the *Progress* volume which comes closest to such an effort is Robert Lamb's "Political Elites and the Process of Economic Development." Unfortunately it deals only by inference with today's underdeveloped countries. What is needed from the economists is an attempt to integrate into their systems the significant and relevant factors of a non-economic character.

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